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THE WORKS

OF

LORD MORLEY

IN

FIFTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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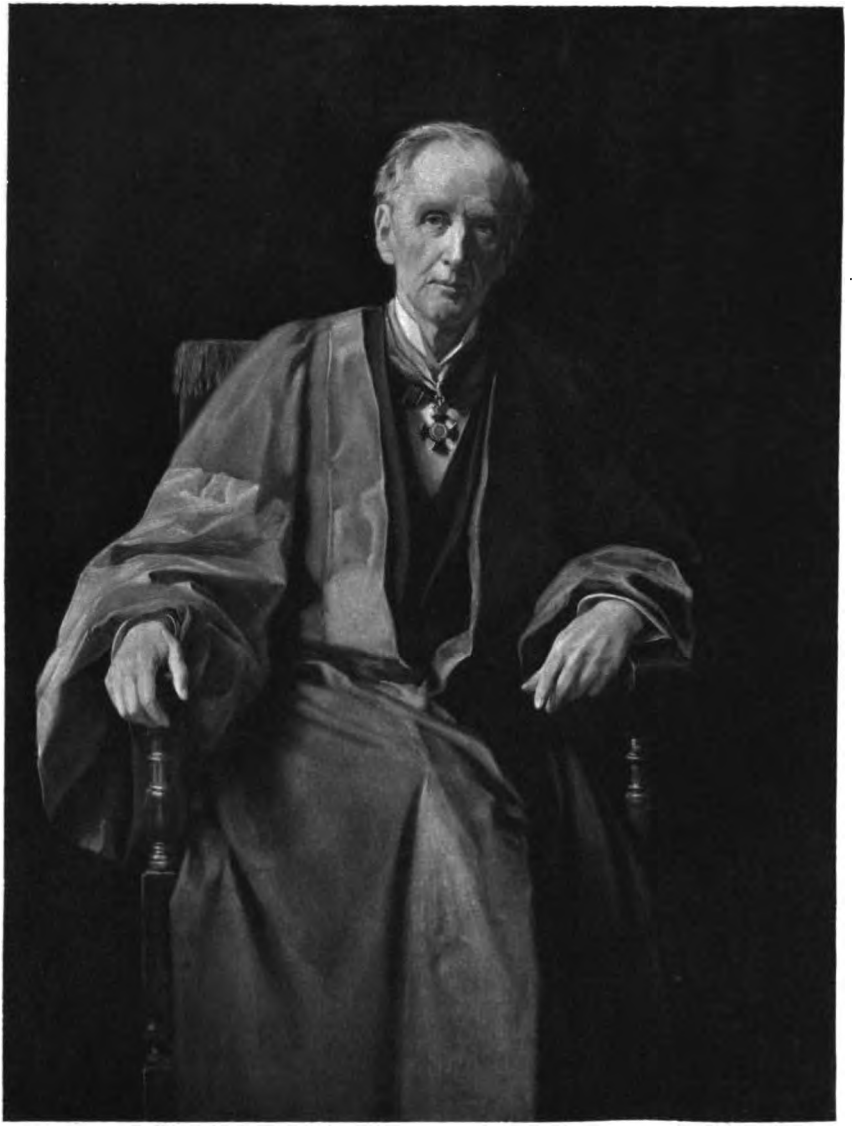

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VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN, O.M.

From the Portrait by the Hon. John Collier at Lincoln College, Oxford.

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RECOLLECTIONS

BY

JOHN VISCOUNT MORLEY
O.M.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1921

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Bates
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12-14-23
9152
15 vols.

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Viscount Morley of Blackburn, O.M. From the Portrait by the Hon. John Collier at Lincoln College, Oxford.

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INTRODUCTION

THE war and our action in it led to my retirement from public office. The world is travelling under formidable omens into a new era, very unlike the times in which my lot was cast. This is no reason why an effort to recall some lines in the physiognomy of those times should be out of place or season. There is an old saying that to live is to outlive. This is not to tell us that "from the tablet should be abolished quite the cheerful past." It means no more than that Ideals have their hours and fade. The oracle of to-day drops from his tripod on the morrow. In common lines of human thought and act, as in the business of the elements, winds shift, tides ebb and flow, the boat swings. Only let the anchor hold. We should not cast our horoscopes too narrowly. One's first associations must have been ill chosen if fidelity to their essence and foundations comes to be overclouded by the falling mists of afternoon.

Mockers say that men of principle are dispensed from the necessity of succeeding; principle is its own reward. But the ironic point depends on your standard of success. We may perceive plenty

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of wrong turns taken at the cross roads, time misused or wasted, gold taken for dross and dross for gold, manful effort misdirected, facts misread, men misjudged. And yet those who have felt life no stage-play, but a hard campaign with not a few lost battles, may still resist all spirit of general insurgence in the evening of their day. The world's black catastrophe in your new age is hardly a proved and shining victory over the principles and policies of the age before it.

A personal story is soon told. In political records its main interest must lie in the points at which it chances to touch weightier things besides the familiar matters of to-day. What arms did your man carry in the serried conflicts of his time? Did he let them rust, and trust for safety to his shield? What pace did he strive to keep with the revolving forces of his age? Did unnoticed tributaries force the channels of his life, at this point or that, to run off into barren sands? *Diu multumque vixi.* It has been my fortune to write some pages that found and affected their share of readers; to know and work on close terms with many men wonderfully well worth knowing; to hold responsible offices in the State; to say things in popular assemblages that made a difference. Such recollections must always be open to the reproach of egotism. I hope that here at any rate it is not of the furtive sheepish kind.

From the point of egotism, again, be sure that complacency and self-content are lucky, if amid

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things vanished in that "other world we call the Past," they do not stumble on plenty of material for self-surprise and self-reproof, and awake to the discovery that fair names of statesman, thinker, writer, were only courtesy titles after all, without real rank, or claim to wider vogue or grave attention. Much of my ground obviously involves others; deeply should I regret if a single page were found unfair, or likely to wound just sensibilities. More deeply still should I deplore it, if a single page or phrase or passing mood of mine were either to dim the lamp of loyalty to Reason, or to dishearten earnest and persistent zeal for wise politics, in younger readers with their lives before them.

J. M.

August 1917.

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BOOK I

THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

The Man of Letters properly so called is a peculiar being; he does not look at things exactly with his own eyes; he has not merely his own impressions; you could not recover the imagination which was once his; 'tis a tree on which have been grafted Homer, Virgil, Milton, Dante, Petrarch; hence, singular flowers, which are not natural any more than they are artificial. . . . With Homer, he has looked at the plain of Troy, and there lingers in his brain something of the light of the sky of Greece; he has taken something of the pensive beauty of Virgil as he wanders on the Aventine slopes; he sees the world like Milton through the grey mists of England, like Dante through the limpid, burning sky of Italy. Out of all these colours he makes for himself a new colour that is unique; from all these glasses through which his life passes to reach the real world there is formed a particular tint, which is the imagination of the man of letters.—DOUDAN.

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CHAPTER I

LANCASHIRE—OXFORD

Men's thoughts are made according to their nature; their speech according to the precepts imprinted on them; but their line in action is after that to which they have been accustomed.—BACON.

IN a Lancashire valley at the foot of bleak, stern, moorland ridges lies what is now the important and prosperous manufacturing town of Blackburn. Three neighbouring ruins of abbey, castle, tower are picturesque links with old history. Antiquaries discover traces of Roman roads, and in the neighbourhood from time to time make valued finds of pottery, coins, cinerary urns, funeral tumuli, weapons, bones, testifying to the presence in corners in and adjacent to the Blackburn parish in remote ages of the Roman legionaries, and after them to what Milton disrespectfully rated as scuffles between kite and crow, among Saxons, Angles, Danes. Cromwell marched to and fro through Blackburn in the course of his rout of the Scots in the battle of Preston, and a current story ran that he slumbered for a night in the parish church.

Its modern existence began with the momentous double event in 1770, when Watt patented his steam-engine, and Arkwright, that marvel of a man alike in inventive skill and preterhuman energy of purpose, patented his spinning-jenny. It took three-quarters of a century, or more, before the factory system with all its opulent triumphs and all its strange new social perplexities, had definitely

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established itself in the Lancashire cotton towns, and worked from stage to stage a social revolution in north and south of this island far more extensive in range of interests than any purely political chapters of the same epoch. Of all this a group of towns in our Blackburn corner grew to be a manufacturing centre.

The district was the centre of the almost countless divisions and subdivisions of the puritan Nonconformity of Lancashire, just as Catholicism prevailed without movement in another area of the same county. The attempt to trace links between industrial movements and the Reformation is without historical support, but the spirit of the factory towns, whether church or chapel, was stiffly evangelical. The people had a character with marked force of its own. Ready to respect where respect on any good ground was due, they are ready, too, with a blunt pride that is no bad form of self-respect. They have always had the virtues of fraternal and genial plain speakers; they show themselves independent, shrewd, quick, keen-bitten. They have a cherished vernacular with broad accent and original vocabulary, which enables them to do apt justice to any of their opinions and emotions. In this dialect a native genius has produced songs that touch the Lancashire ear at home or over the seas, as Burns touches the Scot. Waugh's "*Come whoam to thy childer and me*" has been pronounced by critics not too much given to superlatives one of the most delicious idylls in the world. The popularity of this and other vernacular products in prose and verse does something to illustrate the kindness and right-mindedness of the people. They are full of local public spirit, and have the excellent quality of putting their whole hearts into the things they care for, grave or gay. Here the writer was born in the last week of 1838. Here was my home off and on

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for some twenty years to come. The punctual clang of the factory bell in dark early mornings, with the clatter of the wooden clogs as their wearers hastened along the stone flags to the mill, the ceaseless search for improvements in steam-power and machinery and extension of new markets, the steady industry, the iron regularity of days and hours, long remained in memory as the background of youth, with perhaps a silent passage into my own ways and mental habits from the circumambient atmosphere of some traits of my compatriots.

My father was a surgeon of good professional repute. He came of homely stock from one of the Yorkshire valleys near Halifax, and my mother was Northumbrian. A man of strong character, he was exacting, though capable of delightful geniality, a moderate lover of his profession, a born lover of books. He had taught himself a working knowledge of Latin and French, and I long possessed the pocket Virgil, Racine, Byron, that he used to carry with him as he walked to the houses of handloom weavers on the hillsides round. Born a Wesleyan, he turned, though without any formality that I know of, from chapel to church, but he was negligent of its ordinances, critical of the local clergy, and impatient as if of some personal affront of either Puseyites on the one hand, or German infidels on the other. Though vague, his disapproval of these foes of evangelical truth was stern; the divine to whom he was chiefly addicted was Channing, and the ecclesiastic whom he most admired both as preacher and church governor was the famous Chalmers. We were baptized by a genial clergyman from the neighbouring parish of Tockholes, who in his youth had been a subaltern at Waterloo.

As domestic disciplinarian he was strict, and the rigours of Sabbatical observance forced on us

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a literary diet that neither enlightened the head nor melted heart and temper. He sent me to an excellent school in the town, kept by an Independent of much local renown for accurate teaching and severe exactitude in general habits. This school had a strong hold on me, for it abounded in the unadulterated milk of the Independent word, and perhaps accounted for nonconformist affinities in some of the politics of days to come. Here I made such satisfactory way that, after a short spell at University College School in Gower Street—where Chamberlain had preceded me, and Bywater the great Hellenist was my companion—my father thought it worth while to send me, though he could not well afford it without personal sacrifice, to Cheltenham College. Here under three or four fellows of Trinity, all of them teachers of talent and experience, I worked along the regular groove, without any marked proficiency, except that now and then I did a set of Greek iambics that was praised and handed to posterity in the school album, and in two or three successive years I carried off the first prize for history in a combined class of the two highest forms. I tried my hand at a prize poem on Cassandra, princess of evil omen; it did not come near the prize, and I was left with the master's singular consolation for an aspiring poet, that my verse showed many of the elements of a sound prose style.

From Cheltenham I got a scholarship at Lincoln College, Oxford, and it gave my father a little whimsical pleasure to think that John Wesley had been a fellow of the College (1726), nominated thereto by a rector whose two names happened to be my own. For many terms I was lodged in Wesley's rooms, sometimes ruminating how it was that all the thoughts and habits of my youthful Methodism were so rapidly vanishing. At the moment Lincoln was in a state of sad intellectual

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dilapidation. A common-room intrigue had ended in the installation as its head of a clergyman from a college living in Yorkshire who hardly knew how to read and write. The consequence was the withdrawal in black, unphilosophic mortification from all college work of Mark Pattison, the man whose zeal and competence for university teaching in its true sense was unsurpassed by any tutor or professor then in Oxford, and only rivalled perhaps by one. If I had fallen under his influence, it would assuredly have made all the difference in a thousand ways. When he afterwards became my friend it was too late. The tutor to whom I fell was Thomas Fowler, afterwards the Head of Corpus. He had taken a splendid degree, and the spirit of an ardent practical reformer glowed in him through the whole of a useful, well-filled, and truly honourable life. His interests and attainments were much wider than those of most dons of that time, when natural science was just fighting in earnest for a place in education outside of the monopoly of Anglican divinity and the ancients. Without any marked originality, he had vigour and insight; he was careful, moderate, and sound. He had the quality of the better men of the era in refusing ignoble contentment with life as it is and things as they are. He had not, it is true, the rare magic of psychagogic influence which, for that matter, made some contemporary purveyors of cloudy stuff pass for greater than they were. As might be supposed, he made me Aristotelian and not Platonist, for apart from tutorial teaching that was, I think, the Lancastrian temperament. However that might be, we all knew our debt for his example of firm clearness of exposition, his ready helpfulness, his patient perseverance in work, his kindness, his sterling worth.

I attended Conington's Virgil lectures, Stanley's on ecclesiastical history, in which I was delighted

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by new knowledge and an attractive historic moral; and of course Mansel's Bamptons, the famous official reply, if reply it was, in the great controversy of the moment between the doctrines of Mill and those of Hamilton. History as a subject of serious study—strange as it may seem to-day—was not formally recognised in either university until the middle of the century or a little later, and Goldwin Smith, although a master of brilliant and penetrating expression, figured rather as politician than professor. In politics he was a Liberal champion, with much influence both on educated men and on those who were glad to have one of the best-educated men of his day on their side.

Seldom did I miss a sermon of the Bishop's at St. Mary's, for Wilberforce excelled any man I ever heard, ecclesiastic or secular, in the taking gift of unction. For this I must confess an irresistible weakness. The only rival within my experience, unless it were Guthrie at Edinburgh, was Spurgeon in South London; he had a glorious voice, unquestioning faith, full and ready knowledge of apt texts of the Bible, and a deep earnest desire to reach the hearts of congregations who were just as earnest in response.

The association of antique halls and grey time-worn towers went deeper than the schools, and companionship was more than lectures. Overton was a friendly and popular man at our scholars' table, afterwards the writer of various books, pronounced by competent opinion to be truly meritorious in the field of Church history and biography. His volume on Law, author of the memorable *Serious Call*, is liberal-minded and readable, as, the story of a figure that in spite of theology even Gibbon found attractive, we should expect it to be. Our ways ran in opposite directions, to a distance that the pious founders whose bread we ate in common would have ill understood, for

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I think my book on Diderot appeared in the same year as his history of the English Church in the eighteenth century. Meanwhile he was stroke of the boat and captain of the Eleven. More is to be said of another comrade of very different type.

Beyond the influence of any tutor or professor was the senior commoner, Cotter Morison. No more engaging figure appeared in an Oxford quadrangle, nor one, it must be confessed, in tone, manners, knowledge, and way of thinking and living, more entirely unacademic. He was some six or seven years my senior, and at twenty this was the distinction between manhood and boyhood. He had lived much abroad, mainly in France, with a mother whose over-tender devotion left him to the undirected gratification of tastes and interests that had grown up within him somehow, and would by this time have given him a command of really effective attainment, if only they, or any of them, had been concentrated. Migratory residences had made him desultory and discursive. This, however, was the quality that did him no harm in the endless discussions, morning, noon, and night, *de omni scibili*, of ingenuous, sharp-witted youths, with the lively intellectual ambitions natural to their years, fresh and jubilant from the restraint of school, just stepping on the threshold of new shrines. It was very bad for exercises in examination, but it was stimulating, awakening, and, in a slightly random way, instructive. He had made a special study of the age of Louis XIV., was capable of considering it seriously in relation to ideas of general history, was well versed, well informed, and even passionately concerned in Catholicism, not as a body of faith and rite, but as a stupendous system of government with profound significance in the annals of mankind. He longed, as in truth any of us well might, for the historian to arise who, as he used to say, would depict with sweeping

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brush the Decline and Fall of Theological, as did Gibbon of Imperial, Rome. Even in these days he was hard at work in preparing the life of St. Bernard, which was so interesting to read, is described to-day as the best biography of a leading mediaeval spiritual figure, and had the good fortune to gratify so singular a trinity as Carlyle, Manning, and the Positivists of every tinge. It remains a lasting contribution to the story and the meaning of Catholic monasticism. His monographs of a later date on Macaulay and Gibbon are admirable estimates. His talk was, I have said, discursive, but he was a serious literary worker, not a dilettante. He was versed in music, and something of an adept in great church architecture and its history. He brought our young souls into vivid and edifying contact with the forces of Carlyle, with *Sartor*, the essays on Johnson and Burns, and the epic of the French Revolution. He pressed Emerson upon us, but for that wise teacher none of us were then ripe, I least of all. He had the art of kindling new life in our spirits, and if you had anything of your own to say, you were sure of quick, sincere, and brotherly response. For brotherly he was in the widest sense both now and always. He was not a man of trenchant power; but his way of easy remonstrance at a paradox, fallacy, or blunder was a hundred times better corrective and stimulant than an hour of sermon or lecture. Well did Meredith mark him as "a fountain of our sweetest, quick to spring, in fellowship abounding." His animation won for him a popularity in college that extended beyond the scholars. He was at home in the saddle, a fencer skilful with the foils, and an excellent boxer; indeed the last of these manly tastes led to a passing dispute of some heat with the college authorities, who insisted that our pious Wycliffite founder four centuries ago could never have in-

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tended an undergraduate to receive in his rooms lessons in self-defence from a too ill-scarred prize-fighter, then seeking patronage among us, and whom the college porter was, at whatever personal risk, forbidden to admit. It was a long journey to the little Holy Club of Oxford Methodists that had, in the face of gay opponents, gathered itself in the same ancient quadrangle a hundred years before.

Some of Morison's opinions passed through odd fluctuations. He was ready to look at anything seriously presented to him; ready to measure and appreciate all values with blithe candour of approach; he had genuine liberality of intellect, sometimes verging on mere vivacity of intellectual impulse. It was in Comte's school and church that he really lived; he was one of their most brilliant adherents. Yet he wound up a volume of fragments under a pregnant and moving name, *The Service of Man*. It drew hot fire from orthodox quarters, and in other ways particularly scandalised the Positivist brotherhood of all their colours. It must, I fear, be judged a miscarriage both of thought and composition. We can only call it the rash attempt of failing days; it could not impair the captivating comradeship of his prime.

It was noted that when Palmerston made his Government in 1859, his Cabinet held six Oxford first-class men (three of them double-firsts), and out of the Cabinet four first-classes. Between 1850 and 1860—my Oxford days—the clergy held the education of England in the hollow of their hands. Their day was soon to be over. New avenues of speculation had been opened in the two fields of natural science, and critical inquiry into the documents and faiths of the world, and philosophic explanations of them. Both avenues were gradually thronged by eager crowds: the learned and competent on the one hand, and people of common, plain intelligence on the other.

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The metaphysical quarrel between intuition and experience, as I have said, filled the sacred galleries of St. Mary's with agitated undergraduates, while Mansel in his Bampton Lectures (1856) made as vigorous an attempt to demolish Mill as Adam Sedgwick had made to pulverise and affront the *Vestiges of Creation* fourteen years before. Loud became the din of internecine war. One group of scientific men fought another group over the origin of species. Within the bosom of the Church of England orthodox divines dragged other divines, including even a bishop, into courts of law. Wiseman had seriously begun the important movement that was destined, under the later influence of men of spiritual genius and literary power like Newman, and men with the art and talent of governing like Manning, to go so far towards bringing Roman Catholic ideals into the English field of serious argument, and securing for their professors the same liberality and same respect as were usual towards other communions. In my college we had the first Catholic undergraduate. The divers German schools began to find clandestine way into theological disputation here, and traditional thought, devotion, dogma, were brought from their place of inaccessible constellations in the spacious firmament on high, down into the rationalist arena of earth. The force of miracle and myth and intervening Will in the interpretation of the world began to give way before the reign of law.

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CHAPTER II

SPIRIT OF THE TIME

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love the human form divine,
And Peace the human dress.

BLAKE.

CRITICS to-day are wont to speak contemptuously of the mid-Victorian age. They should now and then pause to bethink themselves. Darwin's famous book appeared in 1859. Buckle's *History of Civilisation* caught lively public attention the year before, and whatever may be decided on his worth either as philosopher or scholar, his system with its panoply of detail must, as Acton, the severest and most destructive of his Catholic critics, allows, have powerfully appealed to something or other in the public mind, or told something or other very important that people wanted to know. This something or other in the public mind was, in truth, a common readiness to extend an excited welcome to explanation whether of species or social phenomena by general laws, at the expense of special providence. Anybody can see what tremendous questions this curious ferment brought to issue. Herbert Spencer began with *Social Statics* in 1850. *In Memoriam* (1850) exhausted no problems, but it intimated many of the deepest of them, and lent the voice of pathetic music and exquisite human feeling to the widening doubts, misgivings, and flat incredulities of the time. The

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lines in *The Two Voices* about coming through lower lives, and growing through past experience to be consolidate in mind and frame, were taken by Herbert Spencer and other people to show right evolutionary interest in the elucidation of mental science. In 1857 George Eliot began the career of story-teller "in shadowy thoroughfares of thought," that laid such hold upon the reading England of her time, and made critics of high authority, both French and English, both Catholic and rationalist, call her the most considerable literary personality since the death of Goethe. On such an estimate as this perhaps we may say in passing that some teachers, it may be, are too great to be found fault with—a point well worth bearing in mind by fallible mortals—but we should not be over-prompt in allotting these seats side by side with the Olympians on their throne. We may now have outgrown our first glow of enthusiasm for George Eliot's wide and profound culture, her enviable diligence and fidelity of observation, her strong and conscientious intellect, the beneficent humanity of her genius. Experience, as the wise in time discover, brings discrimination. Even of Goethe himself, many and many a page has grown unreadable. There was a philosopher who ruled the official world of thought in France about this time; a rival philosopher said of him that for three days of the week he was mediocre, for three days absurd, but for one day sublime. Let us remain grateful to writers of George Eliot's standard for their seventh day. At least we cannot but agree with Acton, as a fact of public mental history, when he calls her books the emblem of a generation distracted between the intense need of believing and the difficulty of beliefs, while her teaching he called the highest within the resources to which Atheism is restricted. Then the second volume of *Modern Painters*, which George Eliot once told me

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made a deep and lasting mark in her mind, was published in 1846, and the fifth volume in the summer of the last year of our decade (1860). The *Seven Lamps* and *Stones of Venice* belong to the intervening period. Long and singular was Ruskin's journey through many landscapes, and his influence in all directions, social and aesthetic, was so remarkable that even those who have least predilection for it may perhaps call it the greatest event in our literary history since *Lyrical Ballads* and *Waverley*. At least one exceptionally good observer judged that as Carlyle, now busied in the clamorous sophistries of his *Frederick the Great*, had written himself out as a source of social inspiration, it was Ruskin alone among writers of prose, apart from fiction, who relieved us from the reign of Commentators. Brilliant and valuable as some of these may have been, they lived in the vital ideas of others. Whatever else may be said, it was, I think, at any rate possible to be, or think yourself, a fervent disciple of Ruskin, without adhering to a single article of theological tradition or authority. As much may be said of Carlyle, whom Ruskin called his master. Ruskin explained his use of the plural word gods as meaning "the totality of spiritual powers, delegated by the Lord of the universe to do, in their several heights or offices, parts of his will respecting men, or the world that man is imprisoned in—not as in fully knowing, or in security believing, that there are such, but in meekness accepting the testimony and belief of all ages to the presence in heaven and earth of angels . . . aiding good work and inspiring the mightiest. . . . For all these I take the general word 'gods' as the best understood in all languages and widest in meaning . . . and myself knowing as an indisputable fact that no true happiness exists, nor is any good work ever done by human creatures, but in the sense or imagination of such presences."

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The currents of our atmosphere of governing forces blew too strong, as we found, for the potent curiosity of youth to resist. To the charge of youth those of us who were audacious enough could only reply that Descartes, Hume, and Berkeley each achieved his revolution in thought at an age nearer twenty than thirty. It was easy to reproach the new spirit of negation with being rash, headstrong, dilettante, pococurante, and to contemn it because we did not, like Dante's lecturer in the *Paradiso*, "syllogise" our invidious truths. It was idle to demand from us, as some did, what pains we had taken seriously, accurately, definitely, to master controversies about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, or the Epistles to Ephesians or Colossians, or the Second Timothy. Such questions, to be sure, had their own importance and they were left unsettled, but they found the rationaliser uninterested and indifferent. The wind had risen, and questions such as these were dissipated. The rationalist felt no more urgently driven to answer as to particulars of orthodox faith on the banks of the Isis than to answer objections of the faithful at Bombay or Teheran or Hyderabad. He withdrew into the spirit of a poet's line—"*To the eternal silence of the divinities above, cold silence must be the only meet reply.*" This was to be agnostic. There was no mental indolence in the rationaliser; more of that might be charged against the other side. We know after the event —call it Anarchy or by what other name you will —the tremendous changes of thought, faith, conceptions of life, that coming years and new historic forces were waiting to unfold before the undergraduate when he had once floated out beyond the college bar. Newman, that great master of speech, has drawn what he well calls the heart-piercing case that stood at hand for the reflective mind. Here it is:

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To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship, their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths; the progress of things as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity; the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary, hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words: "Having no hope and without God in this world"; all this is a vision to dizzy and appal, and inflicts upon the mind a sense of profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution.

The Cardinal's own solution had lost its sovereignty in face of the revolution that was beginning to sweep over English minds soon after the middle of the century. The position of the churches was summarily set out by Matthew Arnold, descendant of the most unsparing of believers, the son of Winchester and Oxford: "There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialised itself in the supposed fact, and now the fact is failing it."

It was easy to reproach us with sunless creeds and declarations of mental insolvency. Supernatural magic was by no means payment of the rational debt in full, and the fortitude of a resolute, open-hearted stoicism is no bankrupt or useless thing. Well might students discern how the epoch about the middle of the nineteenth century resembled in England the epoch of an

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older world seventeen centuries before. Tide swept upon tide—Evangelicalism, all the movements of liberal theology, Catholic reaction within the Anglican communion, stay of ultramontane leanings among English Catholics, the school then so popular in our middle class of High and Dry. Those who are most alive to the great human impulses that reared the Christian fabric, will most readily recognise the analogy between this age and that which witnessed the introduction of Christianity, as it was put by Leslie Stephen from a point of approach opposed to Arnold's—much empty profession of barren orthodoxy, and, beneath all, a vague disquiet, a breaking up of ancient social and natural bonds, and a blind groping toward some more cosmopolitan creed and some deeper satisfaction for the emotional needs of mankind.

Foreign ideas reached us of that generation in glorious mould. England was the refuge of two famous exiles between 1849 and 1871, a great Italian and a great Frenchman, voices of the most energetic and most imaginative genius since Byron and Shelley. Mazzini and Victor Hugo imparted activity, elevation, and generous breadth of cosmopolitan outlook to the most ardent spirits of the new time in our own island. Humanity fought one of its most glorious battles across the Atlantic. An end had been brought to the only war in modern times as to which we can be sure, first, that no skill or patience of diplomacy could have averted it, and second, that preservation of the American Union and abolition of negro slavery were two vast triumphs of good by which even the inferno of war was justified. The silent, unbroken patience of Lancashire in the sore privations of the cotton famine was another element in the popular direction. If we seek a word for the significance of it all, it is not hard to find. Alike with those who adore and those who detest it, the dominating

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force in the living mind of Europe for a long generation after the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1830 has been that marked way of looking at things, feeling them, handling them, judging main actors in them, for which, with a hundred kaleidoscopic turns, the accepted name is *Liberalism*. It is a summary term with many extensive applications; people are not always careful to sort them out, and they are by no means always bound to one another. There are as many differences in Liberalism in different ages and communities as there are in the attributes imputed to that great idol of the world which has been glorified under the name of Republic, though the system of the American Republic is one thing, and the working principles of the French Republic are another, and the republic in the north of the American continent has little in common with either system or spirit in the republics of the south.

Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual is its root. It stands for pursuit of social good against class interest or dynastic interest. It stands for the subjection to human judgment of all claims of external authority, whether in an organised Church, or in more loosely gathered societies of believers, or in books held sacred. In law-making it does not neglect the higher characteristics of human nature, it attends to them first. In executive administration, though judge, gaoler, and perhaps the hangman will be indispensable, still mercy is counted a wise supplement to terror. General Gordon spoke a noble word for Liberalist ideas when he upheld the sovereign duty of trying to creep under men's skins—only another way of putting the Golden Rule. The whole creed is a good deal too comprehensive to be written out here, and it is far more than a formalised creed. Treitschke, the greatest of modern absolutists, lays it down that

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everything new that the nineteenth century has erected is the work of Liberalism. Needless to say we use the mighty word in its large, far-spreading, continental sense, not merely in the zone of English politics and party. It is worth noting that a strange and important liberalising movement of thought had awakened the mind of New England with Emerson for its noble and pure-hearted preacher in 1837. The duty of mental detachment, the supreme claim of the individual conscience, spread from religious opinion to the conduct of life and its interwoven social relations. Not a reading man, Emerson said with a twinkle of good humour, but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat-pocket. The *Blithedale Romance* and *Walden* are enough to tell us what this strange disquiet came to. In deeper, graver, more extensive shape, the like new-born ideals of simplification, release, enlarged outlook as to Labour, Property, War, political Rule, excited like a flaming comet the reflective imagination all over Europe in 1848.

Newman, to whom European Liberalism was Antichrist, drew up a provisional list of no fewer than eighteen of its obnoxious tenets, with plenty of power to add to their number. These, at least, were to be renounced and abjured. There is little to quarrel with, either in the Cardinal's catalogue or his illustrations, and of course such lists can never disclose the mental disposition, the temper, the frame of mind, the moods, that give them life. They are words emblazoned on the thousand banners that mark the battle-field of our long era. All over Europe poets, jurists, publicists, parliaments, statesmen, demagogues, impassioned mobs, divines of all persuasions, have taken their part, modest or overwhelming as it happens. I have mentioned a great name in the Western Church. A name hardly less notable among contemporary enemies of Liberalism is to be found

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in Pobedonostzeff, the acting head of the holy synod in the orthodox Church of Eastern Europe, the tutor, counsellor, and colleague of two successive Czars of Russia. According to him, a free Church in a free State is an abstract illusion; elected parliaments are mixed comedy and hypocrisy; jury trial is a fraud upon justice; the press with its doctored news, its misleading headlines, and its headlong peremptory criticisms on events and men, weakens all individual development of thought, of will, of character; popular education is one of the worst maladies of our age, for it hands the young to rationalising pedagogues, and destroys the sanctity of home and faith. Why address prayers to St. Nicholas, they say, when you have never seen him help? To the girl, why become the slave of a husband, when reason teaches that thy rights are just as good as his? What is all this but to kidnap the young of the flock under pretence of instruction, and then leaving them to wander, wilful and unguided, in the wilderness. The case against the school of the holy synod was both trenchantly and persuasively worked by the boldest genius that Russia has produced. "If society and social order continue to exist, no thanks to the magistrate with his severities, but on the contrary in spite of the magistrate, and because by his side men continued to have pity one for another and to love one another." This was Tolstoy's doctrine, no bad formula for at least one liberalist interpretation of the social union.

It was inevitable that this deep conflict of theory, idea, social aim, should come to a head in politics. They go to the root of government and order; and government and order are obviously in the essence of men as political beings, whether in rulers holding in their hands the direction of a nation's fate, or in that great general mass described in Burke's imposing phrase as

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"those whom Providence has doomed to live on trust." But if government and order are of the very essence, so, too, are conscience, principle, the thinker, the teacher, the writer. To treat these elements of the social structure as strictly secondary and subordinate is the contradiction of Liberalism. Napoleon was the master type. If thinkers thought wrong, or gave an inconvenient ply to conscience, or carried a principle to lengths that were troublesome, it was like mutiny in the regiment. If the spiritual power gave itself airs before the temporal, you would lock it up at Savona or elsewhere until it came to its senses. For all this to-day's name is Militarism, the point-blank opposite of Liberalism in its fullest and profoundest sense, whatever the scale and whatever the disguise. Dr. Johnson, though the best of men, marked a sad divergence from the Liberalism that reigned in the century after him when he said, "I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another: it is of no moment to the happiness of the individual." The strange, undying passion for the word Republic, and all the blood and tears that have been shed in adoration of that symbolic name, give the verdict of the world against him.

But what of University life? At Oxford a leading mind between 1860 and 1880 was T. H. Green, a man remarkable both in mental power and influence. He first gave a shake to Mill's supremacy as logician and metaphysician. But, notwithstanding Mill's conviction that false philosophy is the support of bad institutions, his critic's intuitionist philosophy did not prevent Green from being an ardent reformer, with Cobden and Bright for idols. In 1858 he ventured on a motion at the Union in approval of Bright. "It was frantically opposed," he said, "and after two days' discussion I found myself in a minority of two. I am almost ashamed to belong to a university which is in such

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a state of darkness." Yet light was breaking in more than one quarter of the sky, and the process was due in no small degree to the sons of Oxford, to be led by the most illustrious of them all.

In politics the parliamentary breed, so influential or even imperious a factor in our national life, was of remarkable strength. The Gladstonian star reached its ascendant at the election that made the new Prime Minister in 1868. Disraeli was climbing his giddy ladder up to the high places to which his genius and persistent courage well entitled him. Neither of the two leaders was without sober and capable colleagues, though one had more of them than the other. The two Manchester men—Cobden, who had won free trade, and Bright, who forced reform of the franchise—were well-trusted personifications of definite principles resolutely held. The newspaper press, from lowered price of paper, and the multiplication of people who knew how to read and had got the parliamentary vote, had come into new importance, and was conducted with livelier responsibility and independence and growing sense of power. The temper of vigorous intellectual disputation, again, that had been raised and sustained in two spheres so wide apart as the war against the Corn Laws and the war against Puseyites, had become a sort of mental habit in the country. Men of vivid personality took to it. Schools of thought were metamorphosed into combative parties, and, as I have just been saying, rationalism and natural science blew defiant bugles against the old tradition. Dickens, satirist and humorist, whose appearance every month was as eagerly looked for as the morning newspaper, kindled by his concrete pictures, not by abstract reason, a new feeling for our fellows, new knowledge of them and their ways, and new anger against the gross and stupid wrongs, social and legal, from which they suffered.

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Charles Reade, the admirable practitioner of what he called "the great, the noble, the difficult art of writing," awoke our English world to some of the cruel mischiefs in the middle of it. Mrs. Gaskell, too, fearless of political economy, warned people outside Lancashire of the strange giant forces at work in the new industrialism. Never was literary art, unless we think of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or Silvio Pellico's *My Prisons*, more earnest and effective in stirring the heart to wise and urgent public ends. New generations change their literary taste, but questions of taste in books are secondary in their own day to their active social force. The men of letters and best-known writers in every walk were almost, if not quite, all members of the Liberal household in their general politics. Those years—say from 1860 to 1890—were an animated, hopeful, interesting, and on the whole, either by reason of, or in spite of, its perpetual polemics, a happy generation. Only those whose minds are numbed by the suspicion that all times are tolerably alike, and men and women much of a muchness, will deny that it was a generation of intrepid effort forward.

One word of sovereign power is to be noted. We all know the fire and enthusiasm that spread with splendid flame from France in 1830, or a little later, by half a dozen eternally noble, vibrating, far-sounding words — Right, Justice, Equality, Fraternity, Progress. The last of these five beacon lights had a profound difference from its companion phrases. Progress went far further into "the deep heart of man." Belief in Progress has become the basis of social thought, and has even taken the place of a religion as the inspiring, guiding, and testing power over social action. It is mixed idea, hope, emotion; on many lips no better than a convenient catchword, as little able to bear anything like penetrating analysis as the

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seventeenth of the thirty-nine articles. The dialectician armed with superficial history for the past, and with his eyes wide open on the present, may easily, if he should have nothing better to do, seem to grind the ideas of Progress to powder. Has strength of mind grown stronger? he asks. For what proportion of the world's inhabitants have the marvellous mechanical inventions of our scientific age lightened the day's toil? Is it only that a greater proportion lives the same life of drudgery? Is the small area of the globe that we call civilised more humane, prosperous, peaceful, at this very hour than the Roman Empire was under Severus Antoninus centuries ago? A radical Suffolk vicar of bold intelligence, and a wide traveller, found his way to Egypt (1870), and drew an incidental picture that gave social complacency a start.

It is now winter. Hodge turned out this morning long before daylight. He is now working in a wet ditch up to his ankles in mud all day long, facing a hedge bank. This is a job that will take him three or four weeks. It is winter work, in out-of-the-way fields; and no one will pass in sight all day. He will eat his breakfast of bread and cheese alone, seated on the damp ground with his back against a tree, on the lee-side; and his dinner of the same viands, in the same place, and with the same company.

And what will he be thinking about all day? He will wish that farmer Giles would let him have one of those old pollards on the hedge bank. He could stay and grub it up after work of moonlight nights. It would give a little firing, and his missus would be glad to see it come home. Things are getting unneighbourly dear, and he will hope that farmer Giles will raise his wages a shilling, or even sixpence a week. Times are very hard, and folk must live. He will hope that baby will soon be better. He will hope his wife may not be laid up this winter as she was last. That was a bad job. He got behind at the mill then. Tom and Dick have been without shoes ever since, and he can't say how the doctor's bill is ever to be paid. He will wish he could buy a little malt to brew

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a little beer. He shouldn't make it over-strong. He doesn't hold with that. . . . As he trudges home you see that his features are weather-beaten and hard. His back is bent; his gait is slouchy; his joints are beginning to stiffen from work and rheumatism. His life is dreary and hard, and so is his wife's. She, too, is up before daylight; and her candle is alight for some time after he has laid down his weary limbs, and sleep has brought him forgetfulness. She has some damages to repair, and some odd things to do, which must be done before to-morrow morning, and which she had no time to do during the day. She is now seated for the first time since five o'clock in the morning, with the exception of the short intervals when she snatched her humble meals. She has to look after the sick baby, and the other children; and to look in occasionally on her sick neighbour.

. . . . . .

Achmed is a child of the sun, that sun his forefathers worshipped, and whose symbol he sees on the old temples. Every day of his life, and all day long, he has seen him—

> Not as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light,

pouring floods of light and gladness about him, as he pours floods of life into his veins. The sunshine without has created a kind of sunshine within. It has given him plenty of fête-days and holidays. It has made his muscles springy, his joints supple, his step light, his eye and wits and tongue quick. He is not without his troubles. The Khédive and his people will take all that his land produces, except the doura, the maize, the cucumbers, and the onions that will be barely sufficient to keep himself and his family alive. He will get bastinadoed into the bargain. It always was so, and always will be so. Besides, is it not Allah's will?[1]

When this vein has been worked to the dregs, when you have shown, if you can, that it is all chimera and illusion, yet let us remain invincibly sure that Progress stands for a working belief that the modern world will never consent to do without. It may be true that the telephone and the miracle

[1] *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, by F. Barham Zincke.

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of Marconi are not the last words of civilisation, nor are mechanical inventions of its essence. Let us look beyond. The outcast and the poor are better tended. The prisoner knows more of mercy, and has better chances of a new start. Duelling has been transformed from folly to crime. The end of the greatest of civil wars—always the bitterest of wars—was followed by the widest of amnesties. Slavery has gone, or is going. The creatures below man may have souls or not—a question that brings us into dangerous dispute with churches and philosophies—either way, the spirit of compassion, justice, understanding is more steadily extending to those dumb friends and oppressed servitors of ours, who have such strange resemblances to us in form, faculty, and feeling. These good things the decline of theologic faith has not impeded, and the votaries of human perfectibility are not likely to let us pause. An enterprising youth, emerging from collegiate visions into the rough paths of real life, was not likely to take reflective stock of the wide world into which he had been thrown to sink or swim. He has something else to think of than the Time Spirit—an ennobling conception, yet an elusive force. Seen or unseen, whether its main confluence or the tributaries that swell its volume and compress its course—one way or another the Time Spirit makes itself his master, and is in truth his mirror.

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CHAPTER III

PROFESSION

A Town is the True Scene for a Man of Letters.—HUME.

He begins to perceive that books and systems are not things to be learned in themselves, but are only so many different object-glasses, through which we can look at things.—PATTISON.

THE young graduate, born with a political frame of mind, who towards 1860 found himself transported from Oxford in pursuit of a literary calling, had little choice but journalism. By political temper I mean the same thing as was intended by one of the best students and writers of that time when he said: "Literary opinions hold very little place in my life and in my thoughts. What does occupy me seriously is life itself and the object of it." For this temper journalism is a natural profession, and it offers the temptation of a decent livelihood at short notice, though the too fastidious moralist, if he likes, may mourn that one of the two gravest of all decisions in life is so often settled by reason of gold and silver. The notion has long since passed that to accept money for writing is a traffic that partakes of the sin of Simony. It had been intended that when I was of due age I should go into orders, but life at Oxford had shaken the foundations. For teaching, experience with a youthful pupil whom I accompanied for some months to Paris discovered to me that I had no liking and little aptitude. In later days it was my long-enduring regret that I had not made my way

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to the Bar, with its immense opportunities, its honourable prizes, its fine gymnastic in combined common sense, accurate expression, and strong thought. But I had no prospects or connections, so I only read for a time in chambers, was called, and purchased wig and gown. I was consoled by assurances that prizes are vastly outnumbered by blanks, and that the average income at the Bar is lower than the earnings of the rural labourer. Experience again justified old Johnson's sensible observation, that a man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstract meditation or remote inquiries, though for that matter Collins, who prompted Johnson's saw, wrote at least one exquisite piece of verse that we would not willingly exchange for many leagues of bookshelf close packed with abstract meditation and remote inquiry. Journalism was left, if I should find that I had the vocation. We promptly cast behind us the lesson that we had just learned from Aristotle about the Sophist being a man who took money for teaching what looked like wisdom but was not wisdom. Journalism is a profession with drawbacks of its own. It is precarious in a sense that does not affect the lawyer, the schoolmaster, the doctor, the clerk in holy orders, the soldier, or the sailor. For the writer routine does nothing: the more it does for him, to be sure, the worse for his writing. Incidents of human life that in other walks are only interruptions, to him may be ruin. If his knack, whatever it amounts to, should cease to please, he starves; if his little capital of ideas wears itself out, he is dispatched as monotonous and tiresome; if the journal to which he is attached changes hands or changes principles or expires, he too may expire. I say nothing of the temptation lurking in these irregularities for men of defective quality to ill-starred Bohemian ways, that waste priceless time, impoverish character, and

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as often as not spread long trails of overhanging cloud through life.

The posture into which the journalistic critic is almost bound to throw himself, banishes what might be a salutary suspicion from his mind that the author or the politician under comment may possibly be his superior in the matter after all. This can hardly be altogether wholesome for a man's mental habits, though it fitted Carlyle's hortatory description of the writer as the new priesthood. Wise and subtle was the great French delineator of human strength and weakness, who said that the pleasure of criticism takes from us that other pleasure of being touched to the quick by peculiarly beautiful things. Writing year after year upon instructions, again, can hardly be good for mental health, and I have in my mind's eye more than one contemporary of mine with first-rate literary talent, whom this check upon initiative reduced to rather second-rate work and name. Yet we may consider that, though journalism may kill a man, it quickens his life while it lasts. Of all men in educated callings, unless he has a college fellowship to rest upon, he is least able to let himself degenerate into the too well-known type described by La Fontaine :

> Il se lève un matin sans savoir pour quoi faire.
> Il se promène, il va, sans dessein, sans sujet.
> Il se couche le soir sans savoir d'ordinaire
> Ce que dans le jour il a fait.

With intelligent and well-principled industry, and the faith that his private soldier's knapsack contains the baton of the field-marshal, he will do well enough both for himself and his public.

Let me hasten to say that I thought myself fortunate when I secured more freedom from journalistic urgencies by relations into which I was invited by a leader in the production of books.

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The story of the printing press has been mostly ignored, even by scholars. Yet the doings of Robert Estienne in Paris, of Aldus Manutius, Giolito, and the rest of them in Venice, in the fifteenth century, are marked events in the annals of learning; and the history of typography is a chapter in literature. So is the book trade. Leipzig, for instance, boasts a University, and its name is famous for the Battle of the Nations a century ago, but its place as the market of the book-world, and in the record of the vexed relations between publisher and author, has had no mean significance in Europe. The effect of Goschen, the publisher, on the destinies of Schiller is well known to English readers. Aptly has it been said by one of the most brilliant writers of our day, that the great publisher is a sort of Minister of Letters, and is not to be without the qualities of a statesman. Extravagant as it may sound to the unthinking, more than one passage in chronicles of the writing and selling of books confirms the view. The head of the house of Macmillan when I came to London—it had been founded at Cambridge by an elder brother then deceased—had these qualities in the full sense and measure proper for his task. He had the very first of them to begin with: he was sincerely interested in the drift and matter of good books in serious spheres. The worst of statesmen is that they sometimes rather feign than feel this sort of interest. With him it was genuine. He went about his work with active conscience and high standards. He had the blessing, both attractive and useful, of imagination, added to shrewd sense and zeal for the best workmanship. His eye for the various movements in his time of knowledge and thought, literary, scientific, and religious, showed extraordinarily acute insight. He knew his world: it comprised the most enlightened of our divers social strata, and he gathered a body

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of men around him with many vigorous talents, with his own strict exaction in way of competency, and his own honourable sense of public responsibility. His energy, tranquil persistency, and view of his calling reminded one of Perthes, the famous publisher who did so much for his trade in Germany in the earlier years of the nineteenth century.

It was no secret between us two how very materially, as he said, my way of looking at men and the world of things differed from his own. He bore the light opinion I held of some favourite teachers and apostles of his without the least impatience, consoling himself by the retaliatory guess that "Mill and the Comtists are not quite at the centre of truth, and will speedily pass their day." Fortunately for me this made no difference either in his constant and zealous goodwill to me as a friend, or his indulgent confidence for many years in my professional utilities, though my advice like most advice was sometimes bad if sometimes good.

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CHAPTER IV

TWO EARLY FRIENDS AND TEACHERS

The sigh that rises at the thought of a friend may be almost as genial as his voice. 'Tis a breath that seems rather to come from him than from ourselves.—LANDOR.

I

ON two illustrious names connected with early days my memory lingers with especial pride and deep attachment. They were borne by men in every aspect of widely different type. But it was a true and delightful saying of one of them, that we lose a proper sense of the richness of life, if we do not look back on scenes of our youth with imaginative warmth. Well, I think, do those early scenes and their kind and enduring associations, so far off yet so close, deserve this exquisite recall.

Meredith.

It would be hard to imagine finer personal inspiration for a beginner with a strong feel for letters in their broadest sense—letters in terms of life, and in relation to life—than was George Meredith in his early prime. When I came to London at five or six and twenty to try my fortunes at a hazardous vocation, he, being ten years my senior, benevolently took to me, and extended a cordial, indulgent, and ever faithful hand. I was happy enough to hold it until the very end of his life, when he left me as one of his three trustees. His genius in his early days and mine had met little encouragement, and his name was neither widely known nor at all valued even by a few,

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and so in truth it stood for long years after. He lived, when I came to know him, in a modest cottage in the Esher country in Surrey; it had, as he said, very much the appearance of a natural product of the common on which it stood. The homely place was tended by a person who was, in his own words, of excellent temper, spotless principles, no sex. He was a thoughtful, prudent, devoted father to his little son. Peacock, the intimate of Shelley, and author of fiction that the world by some mistake seems to have almost forgotten, was his father-in-law, and from Peacock he acquired marked qualities of thought and style, as well as a taste for neat dishes and old wine, though, to be sure, nobody was more capable than Meredith all his life of fantastic tricks in the sovereign chapter of diet.

He came to the morning meal after a long hour's stride in the tonic air and fresh loveliness of cool woods and green slopes, with the brightness of sunrise upon his brow, responsive penetration in his glance, the turn of radiant irony in his lips and peaked beard, his fine poetic head bright with crisp brown hair, Phoebus Apollo descending upon us from Olympus. His voice was strong, full, resonant, harmonious, his laugh quick and loud. He was born with much power both of muscle and nerve, but he abused muscle and nerve alike by violent gymnastic after hours of intense concentration in constricted posture over labours of brain and pen.

His personality seemed to give new life, inner meaning, vivacity, surprise, to lessons from wholesome books and teachers, and to shower a sparkling cataract of freshness on them all. Even the sight of a devoted worker persevering in unrewarded toil against clouds of difficulty, was in itself no ordinary stimulus. My interest and love for a book as a book he had no share in: it was to him no more than a respectable superstition, with

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which for himself he had no more sympathy than Darwin had. Loud and constant was his exhortation. No musical note from a lute, it was the call of the trumpet from live lips. Live with the world. No cloister. No languor. Play your part. Fill the day. Ponder well and loiter not. Let laughter brace you. Exist in everyday communion with Nature. Nature bids you take all, only be sure you learn how to do without.

Even the trite commonplaces of conduct, set forth in all the tones of physical joy, as he strode over his own fir countryside, over the heights of Hindhead in his beloved south-west wind, or along the running waters of Wordsworth's northern dales, were kindled into a new light as of planetary stars. The compass of his philosophy moved true, but after Oxford the boat's orientation was fresh, the sails were differently set. This was Meredith and the law of his unwritten Tables. Such his animating counsels to a junior in whose future usefulness he had faith. He prefixed my initials to a sonnet of exhortation, now printed in his books :

> They number many heads in that hard flock,
> Trim swordsmen they push forth; yet try thy steel,
> Thou fighting for poor humankind, wilt feel
> The strength of Roland in thy wrist to hew
> A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,
> And bring the army of the faithful through.

Nobody in prose, and I almost dare to say nobody in verse, has surpassed Meredith in precision of eye and colour and force of words for landscape, from great masterpieces like the opening pages of *Vittoria*, or the night on the Adriatic in *Beauchamp*, down to the thousand vignettes, miniatures, touches, that in all his work bring the air, clouds, winds, trees, light, storm, with magic truth and fascination for background and illumination to his stage. He lived at every hour of day and night with all the sounds and shades of nature

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open to his sensitive perception. These divine and changing effects were not only poetry to him, nor scenery; what Wordsworth calls the "business of the elements" was an essence of his life. To love this deep companionship of the large refreshing natural world brought unspeakable fulness of being to him, as it was one of his most priceless lessons to men of disposition more prosaic than his own.

I once commended to him (1877) Goethe's well-known and ever noble psalm of life, "Das Göttliche." He wrote me that he had read it once more with a feeling of new strength, which is like conception in the brain: "This is the very spirit of Goethe. I have many times come in contact with it and been ennobled. Fault of mine if not more. This high discernment, this noblest of unconsidered utterance, this is the Hymn for men; this is to be really prophet-like." He worked and slept up in his little chalet on Box Hill. "Anything grander," he said, "than the days and nights at my porch, you will not find away from the Alps, for the dark line of my hill runs up to the stars, the valley below is a soundless gulf. There I pace like a shipman before turning in. In the day, with a S.W. blowing, I have a brilliant universe rolling up to me; after midnight I sat and thought of Goethe, and of the sage in him and the youth." This is Meredith as he lived, and at his best.

In the stillness of the country evening it was an experience both fascinating and edifying to hear his sonorous tones, as in a sort of plain-song he read out to me chosen sections of the fine, profound, and subtle *Modern Love*, or the genial and truthful *Roadside Ballads*, or some prose composition of the finished day. Time came when this recitation lost a little of its enchantment, for, in spite of his protest and remonstrance, I could not always deny that I found a page or a chapter in a novel obscure and beyond my understanding — some riddle of

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elaborated motive, or coil of incident, or dazzling tennis-play of dialogue. It is of no avail for any writer to contend that he is not obscure. If the world, with every reason for the most benevolent will possible, and sincerest effort, still finds him obscure, then for his audience obscure he stands. If the charge is largely made, is not the verdict already as good as found? If the gathering in a great hall make signs that they cannot hear me, it is idle for me to persist that my voice is perfectly audible. The truth is that Meredith often missed ease. Yet ease in words and artistic form has been a mark of more than one of his contemporaries, who amid the world's riddles saw deepest and felt warmest. Even into his best talks there came now and again a sense of strain; if a newcomer joined the little circle of intimates, he was transformed, forcing himself without provocation into a wrestle for violent effects. What would have seemed affectation in men of another mould was natural in him, just as in a different way was the excess in much of Swinburne's prose, great and strong critic as he was. Swinburne more than once apologised to me for his prose as "rank stuff," and so in truth one must confess it sometimes was, if rank means over-luxuriant, lush overgrowth, alike in praise and blame. In Swinburne indeed it was no strain, but natural vehemence and spontaneous rush of words. In Meredith, too, though with little of Swinburne's preterhuman copiousness, his ready resort to high pitch in thought and startling surprise in speech came by strenuous temperament. Or is it ungrateful to say as much of one to whom I owe so much? He was eager to learn everything new in public things; incomparable in fitting a fool's cap on a pretender, open to censure of some contemporary writers, a master in finding a word of power for some sane hint or mocking innuendo. In politics, which are mostly the salt of table-talk

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among men of active mind, he used to say, "Generally I am with the Liberals, but I do not always take party views." Mostly when people say they do not take party views, we may safely assume they are passably good Tories. That was assuredly no case of his. When our prospects in the Irish battle were darkest, Meredith stood firm to our drooping green flag.

His aversion to sentimentalism sometimes drew him near to a certain hardness, none the less actual even when it was guarded and silent. It sobered that flow of kindness from the heart which endears choice natures, and makes life lovable. But you were not perfectly sure of those "minute obeisances of tenderness" that Wordsworth numbered among his first blessings. He was considerate, benevolent, just, but the strong-hearted Pity, that was a glorious and visible note of Victor Hugo even at his most grandiose, was hardly a gift of Meredith's. One was sometimes regretfully reminded of the line in *Laodamia* about "the just gods whom no weak pity moved." Pathos—as distinct from tragedy—is of all devices of literary art in one sense cheapest and most easily abused. To Meredith nothing came cheaply, but the simple and spontaneous stroke of true pathos may be thought comparatively rare in his work. Still, I was always very sure that he would not have dissented from Bacon's divine saying: "*The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.*" He was tender enough to feel the wound of even temporary alienations. A friend to whom he was much attached, troubled by something or another in his demeanour or too downright and imperious speech, had written in foolish offence that they might perhaps not unwisely part company for a time. His reply was a model of magnanimous solicitude. "I might well think," he wrote, "that my friend would not let it live with him, and that

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he knew my mind better than to allow a sense of variance to spring from such difference in open talk. Possibly a nature that I am proud to know never ceases in its growth, is passing through some delicate stage which finds me importunate; or you feel that you have outstripped me." We may be quite sure that the breach, though its causes were not wholly superficial, quickly vanished in loyal oblivion.

He was never ungenerous to the writers of his time, but he was critical, always here and everywhere else striving after *justesse*. Of much of Browning he hints a thought that it would have been more effective in prose. Swinburne's "vivid illumination," in spite of political extravagance, was a delight to him: "Song was his natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets."

To Tennyson he did full justice as "a fine natural singer," and of the grandeur of a poem like Tennyson's *Lucretius* he was as sensible as any of us. But for what he called the "lisping and vowelled purity" of the *Idylls* and their "mere dandiacal fluting" he maintained an outspoken hatred, and the Holy Grail he described, perhaps not without point, as lines in satin lengths, the figures Sèvres china, not a breath of vital humanity in them. Catullus he adored. Heine's songs thrilled him with pleasure. For *Faust* in its first part he felt all the wonder and admiration that a fine imaginative genius could not but feel. I interested him in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, with its famous apologue of the Three Rings, borrowed from Boccaccio, who borrowed it from earlier people.

Of French we have a written estimate: "For human philosophy, Montaigne; for comic appreciation of society, Molière; for observation of life and condensed expression, La Bruyère; for a most delicate irony scarcely distinguishable from

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tenderness, Renan; for high pitch of impassioned sentiment, Racine. Add to these the innumerable writers of Mémoires and Pensées, in which France has never had a rival." Of French writers then living he placed Victor Hugo on a sublime height of pre-eminence, as did all the world at that moment. *Travailleurs de la Mer* had just appeared, and Meredith wrote: "The Storm is amazing; I have never read anything like it. It is next to Nature in force and vividness. Hugo rolls the sea and sweeps the heavens; the elements are in his hands. He is the largest son of his mother-earth in this time present"—a superlative worthy of the great French poet himself.

We may be sure that the mighty topics of the passing day had their full share in Meredith's memorable talks. He was the least possible of a dilettante; so I hope we all were. The years from 1850 to 1870 made what we may call two wondrous decades, unsurpassed in the story of European transformation since Waterloo. His passionate interest in the great European questions of the early sixties lent a singular element of its own to Meredith's personality. Italy had conquered his imagination. His first vision of the enchanted land had been in 1861, when Italy had just risen to a place among European states. Austria still held Venice. A French garrison guarded the Triple Crown at Rome. Cavour was dead (1861). The young kingdom was torn by division both in responsible counsel and popular aspiration, and the old story of plots, spies, conspirators, betrayal, murders, still blackened or reddened the skies. The elements of melodrama, joined to strong Mazzinian moral sympathies, set Meredith's imagination on fire, and two of his best pieces of workmanship in the sphere of fiction were the result (1864–66). Yet it was Nature, not politics, that made Italy the source of some mastering impressions. "My

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first sight of the Alps," he wrote home in 1861, "has raised odd feelings. Here at last seems something more than earth, and visible if not tangible. They have the whiteness, the silence, the beauty and mystery of thoughts, seldom unveiled within us, but which conquer Earth wherever they are. In fact they have made my creed tremble. Our great error has been (the error of all religion, as I fancy) to raise a spiritual system of antagonism to Nature." This hardly comes to much for purposes of controversial logic, but the train of latent thought and feeling, thus suddenly started in his soul, carried him far into new regions of art, faith, and life. As Faust is made to say by Goethe in his remorseful soliloquy, the world does not reveal her secrets to dry thinking; man must converse with Nature, as one spirit with another; "look into her breast as into the bosom of a friend."

"Italy," Meredith writes home, "is where I would live if I had the choice." He would fain have been settled in Italy as representative of a great London newspaper. This was more in him than the familiar case of seeking vague emigration and exile in a whim of discontent with the lot that the fates have cast for us—the whim rebuked by Goethe's word, "Here or nowhere is thine America." Meredith's countrymen now and for long showed their distaste for literary work into which he had put his best, and he, on the other hand, thought he saw (1868) that "the English aristocracy has long since sold itself to the middle class; that has done its best to corrupt the class under it. I see no hope but in a big convulsion to bring a worthy people forth."

When the war between France and Germany came to a head at Sedan, it divided our small Liberal company. The Positivist followers of Comte were some of them, like Harrison and Beesly, ardent for France, Morison an ardent German, Maxse, who

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was not a Positivist, out and out French. "Morley and I," wrote Meredith to his boy, "do our utmost to preserve an even balance. The war is chargeable upon France, and the Emperor is the Knave of the pack. Two generations of Frenchmen have been reared on the traditions of Napoleonism, and these meant the infliction of wrongs and outrages on other nations for the glory and increase of their own. They elected Napoleon for chief because of his name, and in spite of his known character. A more ignoble spectacle than the recriminations of Emperor and people on one another as to the origin of the war after defeat, history does not show." In a notable paragraph next year he says to Maxse: "What I wish is that you and I should look to the good future of men with some faith in it, and capacity to regard some phases of history without letting our sensations blind and bewilder us. I am neither German nor French, nor—unless the nation is attacked—English. I am European and Cosmopolitan—for humanity! The nation which shows most worth is the nation I love and reverence."

To Maxse, 1871.

"It is better to bend the knee to Wisdom than to march in the chorus ranks of partisans. Morley is not German. He agrees with me that it would have been downright madness to create a terrible and justly wrathful enemy for ourselves (looking to the origin of this war) on the chance of securing a frenzied fantastical ally."

We both of us well knew the force of Henry Bulwer's pungent saying after 1871, that Europe had lost a mistress and found a master. This did not alter that feeling for the gifts of France, to which Meredith paid due homage in some fine verse at the crushing moment:

> We look for her that sunlike stood
> Upon the forehead of our day,
> An orb of nations, radiating food
> For body and for mind alway.

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Where is the Shape of glad array;
The nervous hands, the front of steel,
The clarion tongue? Where is the bold, proud face?
We see a vacant place;
We hear an iron heel.

On one great question—perhaps the future may prove it the greatest of his time, and the mainspring of the most striking part of his creative art—he was in accord with Mill. From his earliest days of reflection he said: "I have been oppressed by the injustice done to Women, the constraint put upon their natural aptitude and their faculties, generally much to the degradation of the race." He had not studied women more closely than men, "but with more affection, a deeper interest in their development, being assured that women of the independent mind are needed for any sensible degree of progress." One morning in 1869 I put into his hands Mill's new little volume, less than two hundred pages long, on the *Subjection of Women*. Meredith eagerly seized the book, fell to devouring it in settled silence, and could not be torn from it all day. He had more experience than Mill of some types of women and the particular arts, "feline chiefly," to which some have recourse to make their way in the world. It was a memorable day when he found the case set out, with a breadth, strength, and grasp, that raised the question brought up in France by Condorcet at the end of the eighteenth century, to a new and active position in English-speaking countries in the nineteenth. Meredith had no special choice, it seems, among the women of his books. "Perhaps I gave more colour to Diana of the Crossways and Clara Middleton of *The Egoist*, and this on account of their position." Whatever his hidden intention, whatever we may think of them as creations or of the play and analysis of motive, or of the elaborated colouring as he calls it, we can hardly doubt that

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the stir of all the table-talk about his gallery of fair ladies was in its own way a contribution to far-reaching social discussion of our time. He would, I think, have resisted, after her earliest production, the saying of Acton, a man both of great knowledge and of strength of judgment, that George Eliot's works are "the high-water mark of feminine achievement." I am not sure what other names he would have proposed for competition in the flashing tournament; perhaps Madame de Staël, perhaps George Sand, as Matthew Arnold would so confidently have done.

1881. He wrestled manfully with the necessity for daily travail, "and for a public that does not care for my work." His persistence in this sore toil was heroic. "The quality of my work does not degenerate; I can say no more. Only in my branch of the profession of letters, the better the work the worse the pay, and also, it seems, the lower the esteem in which one is held for it." It was my good fortune, in days when publishers gave him little welcome, to be of use to him by printing two, or was it three, of his novels in the periodical of which I then had charge. Of one of these George Eliot asked me whether we found that it pleased our readers. I answered as best I could. She said she had only discovered one admirer of it, a very eminent man as it happened, and even him she had convicted of missing two whole numbers without noticing a gap.

We know how he placed his own books in prose. He saw many faults in all of them. "*The Egoist* came nearest in proper degree of soundness and finish. In *Diana* a breathing woman is produced, and I felt that she was in me as I wrote. *Rhoda Fleming*, though liked by some (among whom by the way was Pater), but not much by me. *Feverel* was earnestly conceived, and in some points worthy of thought. *Beauchamp* does not probe so deeply,

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but is better work on the surface." This was in 1906. About that time I talked with him as he sat a prisoner in his chair, garden and trees in sight, breezes playing overhead. He quarrelled a little with his literary fate. I tried comfort for him in the reminder that he had now at last arrested the imagination of some of the best intelligences of his time, by a gallery of creations some of whose names had gained a place among the most familiar in fiction. My solace did not move him, for his poetry had found no large audience, and it was as oracle from the tripod of the poet that he would have chosen to sway his age.

Here is a note of a visit to him :

June 16, 1894. At one drove to Box Hill to visit George Meredith, whom I had not seen for an age. His disabilities in movement were painful, and he is very deaf. Otherwise he was less altered than I had expected. One or two splendid expressions fell from him, but on the whole he was less turbulent and strained than he used to be. We sat in the garden for a couple of hours. A glorious summer day. Melancholy can never be absent from the last days of a disappearing orb; but this was less melancholy than some—*e.g.* than Mr. Gladstone's. Meredith's lifelong view of nature and human days fits in with the evening, as with the noonday hour. He has shunned the world, and so it costs him less to leave it. Mr. Gladstone has been ever in the world, and though above it in gifts, yet he has ever been of the world, performing splendid, substantial, and enduring duties.

If Meredith had ceased to be sanguine, hopeful, confident for the world if not for himself, life would have lost savour and meaning for him. Thomas Hardy stayed with him (1905). "I am always glad to see him," Meredith writes, "and have regrets at his going, for the double reason that I like him, and am afflicted by his *twilight view of life*." In the same vein he could never share what was not the dominating, but the underlying, mood of a near friend of his. I had a cast of Michelangelo's famous figure of the Penseroso in

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my library, presiding over an array of shelves well stocked with saints, sages, and some demoniacs, with

> A look that's fastened to the ground,
> A tongue chained up without a sound.

Meredith had no sympathy with either the figure or its possessor's argument. He was impatient of
1904. talk of "life's little ironies." He wrote to Leslie Stephen in late years when they were both of them physically disabled for the rest of their lives: "We who have loved the motion of the legs and the sweep of the winds, we come to this. But for myself, *I will own that it is the Natural order. There is no irony in Nature.*" A manly and valiant utterance, to be envied by all of us in good time. As to philosophy, all depends on definition. It is at least sure that contradictions, incoherence, deceits, surprises, abound in human life and character, and the Comic Spirit could well be trusted to bring him as near to life's ironies, little or terrible, as Nature might require. Has the irony of human experience ever found sublimer expression than in the famous and unforgotten lines that I had first heard from his lips in night readings at Copsham?

> In tragic hints here see what evermore
> Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse
> To throw that faint thin line upon the shore.

Of death—to so many of those who have fought most bravely the battle of life, the sternest of all Nature's ironies—I at least never heard him say very much, though I was at his side by the grave where home bereavement was sorest. There was good reason to be sure with him that death too was only a thing in the Natural Order.

One day not far from the end we went to see him at Box Hill:

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Found M. a trifle older in look, but with a vigorous tongue and most gallant spirit: "Going quickly down," he said; but nothing morbid, introspective, pseudo-pathetic; plenty of hearty laughter, as in days when we were both on a brimming stream: "no belief in future existence; are our dogs and horses immortal? What's become of all our fathers?"

Twilight, after all, has its own place in our partition of the day, and a twilight sky claims its span of a wise man's reflective hours. But Meredith was not meant for pure contemplative: he was the born and lifelong athlete, both in art and career. Milton's exquisite appeal to the pleasing fit of Melancholy, and the "veiled delights" it may bestow, would not have been the inscribed words for the porch of the chalet on Box Hill.

It is no business of mine here to attempt nice measure of Meredith as writer of prose and verse. Classifications and comparisons would seem but barren work. It was his buoyant energy, his sincerity of vision, his spaciousness of mind and outlook, his brave faith in good, in the rise of good standards, in the triumphs of good—these it was that made him a rare moral and intellectual force, the teacher of many a sane and wholesome lesson, among those who had the happiness to be his friends, long years before the world found out the fire and strength and richness in his genius.

II

Through a French friend I was presented to Mill. Mill in 1865. His wife had died in 1859, and he was still in the long seclusion, down at Blackheath, that followed his loss. He had sought my acquaintance on the strength of an article in the *Saturday Review* on New Ideas, of which my friend had told him that I was the writer. "Wherever I might have seen that article," he

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wrote to me in his first note (Nov. 4, 1865), "I should have felt a strong wish to know who was its author, as it shows an unusual amount of qualities which go towards making the most valuable kind of writer for the general public." It was, in fact, the pure milk of the Millite word. By and by I became a pretty regular guest at the Blackheath Sunday dinners, at what would now be held the uncanonical hour of five. In the winter of 1867 I made a flying visit to the United States. Mill gave me half a dozen letters of introduction to Emerson and others, and when I found myself described in one of them as his particular friend, with kind words of hope and prophecy, I knew an elation of spirit such as goes in another order of being with blue ribands and diamond stars. Grote, Spencer, Fawcett, Sir Charles Lyell, Louis Blanc, Thornton, Cairnes, were among the few others at these ideal symposia—names that are security for plenty of independence. A young disciple's reverence, gratitude, and admiration was pretty sure to grow stronger as the days went by, though even young disciples do not always lose the rudiments of a mind of their own, and nobody would have been more displeased than Mill himself had it been otherwise. In bodily presence, though not commanding, at sixty he was attractive, spare in build, his voice low but harmonious, his eye sympathetic and responsive. His perfect simplicity and candour, friendly gravity with no accent of the don, his readiness of interest and curiosity, the evident love of truth and justice and improvement as the standing habit of mind—all this diffused a high, enlightening ethos that, aided by the magic halo of accepted fame, made him extraordinarily impressive.

Concrete topics and particulars were always alive, yet the beacon of an abstract principle was ready at hand to light them up into general sig-

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nificance. Actualities from the newspapers had their full chance, though ideals and principles were the interpreters. Whatever time may have done with the place of his philosophies in competent esteem, it is qualities of mind rather than doctrine that make the inspiring teacher, and here he was for us unmatched. For what could be more invigorating on the threshold of life than such counsels as these: "Keep yourself in the fresh air of the world; do your best in the world's affairs; study the active rather than the passive; do not be an ergoteur, but take pains for clear thought and limpid expression"? He quickened the instinct of great questions—the truest service of all. "Do not expect more from life in the world than the world is capable of giving." Strange is the spell of personality, and Mill's personality was transparent. In his collective influence he made innumerable pulses of knowledge and thought vibrate in his generation. Respect for him became an element of men's own self-respect. How of wit or humour, you ask? He was perfectly patient of a playful sally levelled at bad reasoning, or perverse feeling, or questionable act; but for himself, we were content with his swift detection of a sophism or trenchant exposure of a fallacy, performed with a neatness, finish, and celerity that was a very passable substitute for wit. It was, in truth, a vast deal more pleasant, amusing, and to the point than most of that which passes current for facetiae. He laid it down somewhere that though seriousness must be the *fond* of all characters worth thinking about, yet a certain infusion of the laughing philosopher is a prodigious help towards bearing the evils of life, and must have saved many a one from going mad. Carlyle says of Mill's talk that it was rather wintry and "sawdustish"; we may forgive the old prophet for this passing fling of a splenetic moment, for he admits the talk was

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always well-informed and sincere, and passed the evenings in a sensible, agreeable manner. So it did, and much more. Mill was Carlyle's first and long his only friend in London, and not only lent him his great collection on the Revolution, but gave him, "frankly, clearly, and with zeal all his better knowledge than my own; being full of eagerness in that cause, as he felt I should be. He would have made any sacrifice for me and what I had then most at heart." It was Mill who first set him on Oliver Cromwell. Not so wintry, then, after all. Meredith, who did not know Mill in person, once spoke to me of him with the confident intuition proper to imaginative genius, as partaking of the Spinster. Disraeli, when Mill made an early speech in Parliament, raised his eyeglass, and murmured to a neighbour on the bench, "Ah, the Finishing Governess." We can guess what they meant. Mill certainly had not Bacon's massive cogency, nor the concentrated force of Hobbes, nor the diversified amplitude of Adam Smith. That is true enough, but then no more was he shrill or teasing on small points, or disputatious for dispute's sake, or incessantly bent on proving or disproving something. Yet he could be both severe and plain-spoken as anybody in Parliament or out, and knew how to run an adversary clean through with a sword that was no spinster's arm. Fitzjames Stephen, who led the first effective attack on Mill's pontifical authority, said he was cold as ice, a walking book. On the contrary, he was a man of extreme sensibility and vital heat in things worth waxing hot about. In truth he sometimes let sensibility carry him too far. One notable afternoon in European history, I saw him in an instant blaze into uncontrollable anger. It was July 14, 1870. He was sitting in his garden, and I brought him the news that France had declared war upon Prussia. He violently struck his chair

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and broke out in a passionate exclamation, "What a pity the bombs of Orsini missed their mark, and left the crime-stained usurper alive!"

What gave value to his talk, whether in company with six or eight or only one, was mental discipline at least as much as tenets. The edification lay in the processes that brought him to his conclusions —impersonal temper, tentative feeling of the way, acquiescence in the provisional when you could not reach certitude, instant readiness to weigh a new fact or a revised presentation of an old argument. Ideas are not everything in a teacher, vital though they may be. Mill's merit was the extension of them in spirit and letter to social and political issues and marked events, just where the tentative, suspensory, provisional is least readily welcomed. "The future of mankind," he used to say, "will be gravely imperilled if great questions are left to be fought out between ignorant change and ignorant opposition to change." Boundless patience went with a social hope for mankind that could never be shaken. All the grand sources of human suffering, he was convinced, are conquerable more or less by human effort. The process is slow; many generations perish in the breach; every mind intelligent enough and generous enough to bear a part, however small, will draw an enjoyment in the contest which he would not for any bribe in selfish indulgence consent to be without. Mill distrusted emotion apart from well-directed effort. He once called it a fatal drawback to Victor Hugo's claim to the world's immense recognition that he had not brought forward a single practical proposal for the improvement of that society against which he was incessantly thundering. I offered the obvious reflection in reply, that you have no business to ask poets to draft bills; Hugo was inspired by sovereign pity for his fellows, a divine rage against the injustices

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of the strong to the weak, and a passionate revolt against the monstrous cruelties of outer Nature to her sentient creatures, and this was exactly what happened to be Mill's own strongest objection to ordinary theism. I always felt the force of his distrust of "thunderings" after I had enjoyed an hour with Carlyle. You walked away from Chelsea stirred to the depths by a torrent of humour. But then it was splendid caricature: words and images infinitely picturesque and satiric, marvellous collocations and antitheses, impassioned railing against all the human and even superhuman elements in our blindly misguided universe. But of direction, of any sign-post or way out, not a trace was to be discovered, any more than a judicial page, or sense of any wisdom in the judicial, is to be found in his greatest pieces of history. After the grand humorist's despair was over, it was a healthy restorative in passing homeward along the Embankment to fling oneself into the arms of any statistician, politician, political economist, sanitary authority, poor-law reformer, prison-reformer, drainage enthusiast, or other practical friend of improvement, whom genial accident might throw in one's way.

What Mill cared for in his own plans of work was that the aim should at least be definite and in season. He told me that in his younger days, when he was inclined to fall into low spirits, he turned to Condorcet's life of Turgot; it infallibly restored his possession of himself. He was, indeed, of the same rare type. The keyword of Turgot has been described as Justice rather than Pity. In one sense the same is true of Mill, but perhaps Pity, especially in his later years, was a more active spring of his passion for Justice than even the love of well-ordered government that consumed "the god-like Turgot." They shared aversion to sect and the spirit of sect, though they founded them-

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selves on the necessity of those ordered opinions and systems of opinion that are very apt to harden into sect, as Comte has shown, and so, for that matter, had the very different spirituality of George Fox shown it. He tells us that he looked forward to a future of unchecked freedom of thought, unbounded freedom of action where not hurtful to others; but also clear and strong conviction as to what is useful and pernicious, "deeply engraved on the feelings by early education and general sentiment, and so firmly founded in reason and the true exigencies of life that they shall not, like all former and present creeds, require to be periodically thrown away and replaced by others." Any one can see that every word here exposes surfaces to comment and criticism, but it may be left as a succinct exposition of a fervent teacher's waking ideals. His sense of the miseries and wrongs of "the greatest number" was the mainspring of the resolute beneficence of thought and purpose that really made his very life and daily being. I am sure he never drew back from his own words, that the condition of numbers in civilised Europe, even in England and France, is more wretched than that of most tribes of savages who are known to us. He would hardly have dissented from the conviction of George Eliot, that powerful writer of his own time: "Life, though good to men on the whole, is a doubtful good to many, and to some not a good at all. To my thought it is a source of constant mental distortion to make a denial of this a part of religion"—a denial, that is to say, in order to vindicate the mysterious ways in which the world's Creator moves. Mill was sometimes impatient—and with young men justly impatient—of any mood like the passing musings of cheerful Herodotus, with the eternal story of the ruler of men abounding in wisdom but destitute of power; of the States once

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great that sunk to small; of Xerxes watching his armed hosts with tears in his eyes at the thought that in a hundred years not one of them would be alive. Things may be only a bad second best, but energy and action, not general rumination, is the moral. Mill would take endless trouble to procure the reversal of an inhuman sentence in a police court; he abhorred insensibility to the sufferings of our fellows in the lower order of creation. He was warm in congratulation on Freeman's attack on field sports published in the *Fortnightly* (1869). "I honour him," Mill wrote, "for having broken ground—a thing I have been often tempted to do myself, but having so many unpopular causes already on my hands, thought it wiser not to provoke fresh hostility."

It is not to be thought that because Mill from first to last worked for a long chain of definite ends, he, therefore, thought of his own share in affecting general opinion, or in helping to encourage right public action, general or individual, as a particular merit in striking his own moral account. From anything like literary vanity no mortal could have been more free. He once told me that after revision and re-revision of a piece of his own, he felt so little satisfied of its exact conformity to his purpose, that he could only bring himself to send it to the printer by recalling how he had felt the same of other writing that people thought useful. Apart from this, which is a secondary point, we met a personal modesty that almost spoke the language of fatalism. This was one of his attractions —so singular a contrast to the common self-applause that exaggerates a secondary service into a supreme achievement, or sets down good fortune to one's own foresight and penetration. Deduct what you owe to influences over which you have had little control or none, then weigh how little remains for which you have a right to claim individual credit.

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Mill, himself, condensed a practical page of the chapter into a famous sentence: "It would be a blessing if the doctrines of necessity could be believed by all *quoad* the characters of others, and disbelieved in regard to their own." This was both in temporal things and spiritual alike to open a chapter in the deepest matters of government in States and self-government in men, and of much besides—the awful chapter of Providence, will, fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute. I am tempted to transcribe a line or two from a forgotten piece of his on Socialism, published after his death:

> Some are born rich without work, others are born to a position in which they can become rich by work; the great majority are born to hard work and poverty throughout life, numbers to indigence. Next to birth the chief cause of success in life is accident and opportunity. When a person not born to riches succeeds in acquiring them, his own industry and dexterity have generally contributed to the result, but industry and dexterity would not have sufficed unless there had been also a concurrence of occasions and chances which falls to the lot of only a small number. . . . Energies and talents are of much more avail for success in life than virtues. . . . In the situation of most people no degree whatever of good conduct can be counted on for raising them in the world without the aid of fortunate accidents.

I do not know whether then or at any other time so short a book ever instantly produced so wide and so important an effect on contemporary thought as did Mill's *On Liberty* in that day of intellectual and social fermentation (1859). It was like the effect of Emerson's awakening address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society in New England in 1837. The thought of writing it first came into his head in 1855, as he was mounting the steps of the Capitol at Rome, the spot where the thought of the greatest of all literary histories had started into the mind of Gibbon just a hundred years before. He had been inclining towards over-government,

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both social and political; there was also, he says, a moment when, by reaction from a contrary excess, "I might have become a less thorough Radical and Democrat than I am." It was the composition of this book and the influence under which it grew that kept him right. Mill believed that no symmetry, no uniformity of custom and convention, but bold, free expansion in every field, was demanded by all the needs of human life, and the best instincts of the modern mind. For this reason, among others, he thought Carlyle made a great mistake in presenting Goethe as the example to the modern world of the lines on which it should shape itself. You might as well, he said (1854), attempt to cut down Shakespeare to a Greek drama, or a Gothic cathedral to a Greek temple. For this bold, free expansion to which Goethe's ideals were the opposite, these two hundred brief pages, without being in any sense volcanic, are a vigorous, argumentative, searching, noble, and moving appeal. The little volume belongs to the rare books that, after hostile criticism has done its best, are still found to have somehow added a cubit to man's stature.

It was easy and useless to show its inconsistency with language used in the *Political Economy*; to argue that though he had made the case for non-interference more complete he had not established a precise middle axiom in Utilitarianism; and to press the acknowledged point that it was not original, but came from Germany. These things did not matter in face of the vital fact that, like Rousseau, it was a moral appeal to the individual man and woman, and only secondarily to the legislator. Whatever else could be said, this at least is the book's position as matter of contemporary history. As literature it will not be compared with *Areopagitica*, the majestic classic of spiritual and intellectual freedom, with its height and

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spaciousness, its outbursts of shattering vituperation, its inflammatory scorn, its boundless power and overflow of passionate speech in all the keys of passion. The fighting prose of the seventeenth century was ill-fitted, indeed, for a teacher in the nineteenth, whose conception of liberty was to be applied over a far wider range, and to be commended by patient and sustained argument addressed to a democracy very unlike the Long Parliament or the men of the Army Council at Putney. Milton's plea for liberty of speech was accompanied by pleas just as earnest for liberty of marriage, and we may tremble to think of the treatment that the author of the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, *Tetrachordon*, *Colasterion*, and the rest of that enormous performance, would have accorded to Mill's *Subjection of Women*. Milton was assuredly no misogynist, but by proxy he spoke of woman as "this fair defect of Nature," and makes the Angel wage war against subjection to a being not to be valued like himself. Literary grandeur, however, matters little where the kernel is a restatement and new reinforcement of Tolerance, discussion without restriction, the free life of the individual, so long as he does not injure other people, fair play for social experiment. On all this nothing could be more bracing than Mill's handling of his lofty case, and the idealism of it, the enthusiasm, sustained as it was for page after page, very nearly approached the electrifying region of the poetic in the eyes of ardent men and women in our age. Much was, no doubt, due to the influence of the remarkable woman to whom he paid such extraordinary homage. It is curious to note in passing that the same homage was paid to a female inspirer by Comte, the other main Positivist thinker of the time. Almost the only one among my friends who knew Mrs. Mill was Carlyle, and when I named her to him, he said little more than this: "She was a woman full of unwise

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intellect, always asking questions about all sorts of puzzles—why, how, what for, what makes the exact difference—and Mill was good at answers."

That there were risks of misunderstanding *Liberty* was not unperceived by all — risks, for instance, that people might take eccentricity to be good for its own sake; or that the fanatic may still be thought useful in his way, and is never other than respectable; or that it is wise to ride opinions to death; or that the ultra must always be in the right. There were cases where this misinterpretation, carried into practice, made dire havoc of life, and recalled a favourite saw of Scott's that "the wisest of our race often reserve the average stock of folly to be all expended upon some one flagrant absurdity." A pregnant, melancholy truth. Macaulay agreed with Mill in thinking a Chinese or Byzantine state would be a terrible declension and calamity, but quarrelled with him as crying Fire in Noah's flood. Macaulay insisted that there never was such triumph of individuality as then. Invention was never bolder. Geology was a new true science, Phrenology new and false; what servile respect for usage and authority was shown in Comtism, St. Simonianism, Fourierism?; so great was the taste for oddity that men with no recommendation but oddity stood high in public estimation. Such was Macaulay's demurrer. The eager acceptance of the book, however, was proof enough that he had not taken its true measure. If Mill's father had survived, he might have felt as Martin Luther felt when he saw the rise of Munzer and John of Leyden, Zwinglians and Anabaptists. We cannot say, at any rate, that *Liberty* was the work of the Demagogue, either of Rationalism or anything else, because it was evidently a potent war-cry against the infallibility of Public Opinion, and the usurpation of Majorities, whether by Act of Parliament or social boycott. Even Ruskin,

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who, when I once had the honour to meet him — the only time — at a friend's board, with no other guest, filled the festive hour with unbridled railing at Mill, felt drawn to some of the truths in *Liberty*, which he found both important and beautifully expressed, though not without the very singular rider that "the degree of liberty you can rightly grant to a number of men is commonly in the inverse ratio of their desire for it." Let us leave it with the words of Tolstoy: "One of the principal differences between men consists in the different measure in which they are inspired by their own ideas and those of other people. The ones confine themselves mostly only to use their own thoughts by way of play; they employ their reason as you make the wheels of a machine revolve, after you have taken off the leathern band that binds them to one another; and in the important things of life, and even in the detail of their most ordinary acts, they rely on the thoughts of others, which they call Usage, Tradition, Law, the Convenances."

The tract, for it is in bulk hardly more, on the subjection of women was a powerful sequel. The first time I heard Mill speak was at a meeting in Willis's Rooms. The audience was extremely small, but the platform remarkable. Mill presided, and the speakers included Grote, Froude, Charles Kingsley, Fawcett, Louis Blanc. The common text was, I think, the claim of women to all the privileges of political citizenship, and to a removal of their odious disadvantages in respect of property rights. It is not denied that Mill's authority had much to do with the many Acts between 1870 and 1893 importing a new idea of justice into the property rights of married women, and changing a state of law which we now look back upon with abhorrence. He recalls to us the beautiful picture of Dugald Stewart, the famous teacher of a large

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and powerful breed in the generations before, including Mill's fathers: "The man—the enlarged, liberal, and tolerant spirit which he carried into speculation — his unwavering confidence in the steady progress of humanity towards a fuller realisation of truth and virtue . . . long remained in the memory of numerous pupils scattered abroad over many lands whom his impressive teaching first awoke to a full sense of the duty and the dignity of man." So was it all with Mill.

The last time I saw him was a few days before he left England (March 5, 1873). He came to spend a day with us in the country, of which the following rough notes happened to be written at the time in a letter to a friend:

He came down by a morning train to Guildford Station, where I was waiting for him. He was in his most mellow and even humour. We walked in a leisurely way, and through roundabout tracks, for some four hours along the ancient green road which you know, over the high grassy downs, into old chalk pits picturesque with juniper and yew, across heaths and commons, and so up to our windy promontory, where the glorious prospect stirred him with lively delight. You know he is a fervent botanist, and every ten minutes he stooped to look at this or that on the path. Unluckily I am ignorant of the very rudiments of the matter, so his parenthetic enthusiasms were lost upon me.

Of course he talked, and talked well. He admitted that Goethe had added new points of view to life, but has a deep dislike of his moral character; wondered how a man who could draw the sorrows of a deserted woman like Aurelia in *Wilhelm Meister* should yet have behaved so systematically ill to women. Goethe tried as hard as he could to be a Greek, yet his failure to produce anything perfect in form except a few lyrics proves the irresistible expansion of the modern spirit, and the inadequateness of the Greek type to the modern needs of activity and expression. Greatly prefers Schiller in all respects; turning to him from Goethe is like going into the fresh air from a hothouse. Spoke of style; thinks Goldsmith unsurpassed; then Addison comes. Greatly dislikes the style of Junius and of Gibbon; indeed, thinks meanly of the latter in all

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respects, except for his research, which alone of the work of that century stands the test of nineteenth-century criticism. If you want to know why the Roman Empire declined and fell, read Finlay. Did not agree with me that George Sand's is the high-water mark of prose, but yet could not name anybody higher, and admitted that her prose stirs you like music. Seemed disposed to think that the most feasible solution to the Irish University question is a Catholic University, the restrictive and obscurantist tendencies of which you may expect to have checked by the active competition of life with men trained in more enlightened systems. Spoke of Home Rule. Made remarks on the difference in the feeling of modern refusers of Christianity as compared with men like his father, impassioned deniers, who believed that if only you broke up the power of the priests and checked superstition, all would go well—a dream from which they were partially awakened by seeing that the French Revolution which overthrew the Church still did not bring the millennium. His radical friends used to be very angry with him for loving Wordsworth. "Wordsworth," I used to say, "is against you no doubt in the battle which you are now waging, but, after you have won, the world will need more than ever those qualities which Wordsworth is keeping alive and nourishing." In his youth mere negation of religion was a firm bond of union, social and otherwise, between men who agreed in nothing else. . . . And so forth, full of suggestiveness and interest all through. When we got here he chatted to R—— over luncheon with something of the amiableness of a child, about the wild flowers, the ways of insects, and notes of birds. He was impatient for the song of the nightingale. Then I drove him to our roadside station, and one of the most delightful days of my life came to its end, like other days delightful and sorrowful.

The sorrowful day quickly followed. The nightingale that he longed for soon filled the darkness with music, but not for the ear of the dead master; he lay in the deeper darkness where silence is unbroken. He died at Avignon—the famous scene in bygone days, with Pope and anti-Pope, of many a vicissitude in the floating records of spiritual power, papal and anti-papal.

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CHAPTER V

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Wonach soll man am Ende trachten ?
Die Welt zu kennen und nicht zu verachten.

When all is said, the struggle of the wise
Must aim the world to know and not despise.
GOETHE.

Let us conceive of the whole group of civilised nations as being for intellectual and spiritual purposes one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working towards a common result; a confederation whose members have a due knowledge both of the past out of which they all proceed, and of one another.—M. ARNOLD.

I

CARLYLE and others had given a certain vogue to the great names of Goethe, Schiller, Ranke, Niebuhr, but they did not succeed in reaching general opinion, and even so late as 1854 serious men spoke of Goethe's work in England as at an end. The European movement since 1830 was little studied in England by even the leading men, much less by the average.

Some two University generations before my own, Oxford had sent to London a remarkable group of disciples of Comte. This group became known to me through Lewes and George Eliot, who were both, in a more or less informal way, adherents of Comtist doctrines. Indeed, the latter of the two, with much gravity, more than once assured me that she saw no reason why the Religion of Humanity should not have had a good chance of taking root, if Congreve, its chief authority and

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expounder in our island, had only been blessed with a fuller measure of apostolic gifts. They were recognised as singularly accomplished and high-minded men; they made a distinguished mark as writers; they were devoted and unselfish workers in a wide range of large public issues; they proved peculiarly well able to hold their own in controversy. The system, supported as it was by the attraction of Comte's survey of history, laid strong hold of me; and at one time I was not far off from a formal union with this new church. The anti-sectarian instinct, confirmed by the influence of Mill, held me back. Habitual association with men like Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, who bitterly condemned official Positivism as Catholicism minus Christianity, had something to do with it. Pierre Laffitte, its French representative—and a most brilliant, vivacious, illuminating representative he was—in the many conversations we had together, had tact enough not to labour the pontifical side of Comte's system, while he deepened and strengthened the general impression of the soundness and value of the early speculations, and he did more than anybody else to furnish the key and the direction to my French studies, whatever for their season they were worth. He elaborated in patient detail and with scientific method Turgot's idea of progress, and made of history an ordered course, not a succession of vast epidemic fevers, Revolutions, Reactions, Reformations, Counter-reformations. He did much to rescue history from the desperate case put by Bishop Butler who, one night walking in the gardens behind his palace, suddenly turned to a chaplain and amazed him by the question whether public bodies might not go mad like individuals, for in truth nothing else could account for most of the transactions in history. Frederic Harrison, in those days incomparable as controversialist, powerful in historical

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sense and knowledge, became one of my most intimate and attached friends for fifty years.

It must have been in this school that, besides much else, I began to absorb the lesson that I tried to apply all through—to do justice to truths presented and services rendered by men in various schools, with whom in important and even in vital respects I could not in the least bring myself to agree. Comte has been rightly applauded for according generous recognition to all "who, with whatever imperfections of doctrine or even of conduct, contributed materially to the work of human improvement." Far less elementary in those days than it seems now, this sank deep in me, and in spite of some ephemeral severities of expression that might perhaps be forgiven to one whose pen was in constant employment, most of it controversial, it became a golden rule of historic and literary admeasurement. This was, I may suppose, what drew me to write about men so mutually antagonistic as Burke and Rousseau, Voltaire and Joseph de Maistre. So, too, the same spirit towards the diverse words of thought, beauty, exhortation, or command, "breathed from Dead Men to their kind," helped me often to keep a good working understanding, and even much more than that, with my chief contemporaries, who thought ill of the school and cast of thought to which I was supposed to belong. Everybody remembers Carlyle's now hackneyed words about himself and John Sterling walking away from Mill in Leadenhall Street, arguing copiously, but "*except in opinion not disagreeing.*" This denotes a broad and humane spirit, though anybody can see that it needs some caution. Without firm clearness of vision, you may discover one day that in the name of such taking words as these, the Laodicean, the Latitudinarian, the Trimmer, the Manpleaser, has made for himself a complacent lodging in your bosom. Difference in

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opinion may mean a good deal after all. Pope Paul III., whatever may have been his secret drift, was spinning no cobwebs when he admonished his Council of Trent that Belief is the foundation of life, that good conduct only grows out of a right creed, and that errors of opinion may be more dangerous even than Sin. Difference of opinion may possibly mean everything; and so in their later days, for that matter, when schism raised an ill-omened head within their ranks, my Comtist friends found out. Still, resolute equity and diligent breadth of outlook in assigning its place to an opinion was one aspect of the rise of what we easily sum up in talking of the historic method, and the triumph of the principle of relativity in historic judgment. The great intellectual conversion of this era, as Renan not any too widely put it, transformed the science of language into the history of languages; transformed the science of literature and philosophies into their histories; the science of the human mind into its history, not merely an analysis of the wheelwork and propelling forces of the individual soul. In other words, the marked progress of criticism and interpretation of life has been the substitution of *becoming* for *being*, the relative for the absolute, dynamic movement for dogmatic immobility. Pattison's essay on English deism in the eighteenth century, first printed in a volume long since dead and buried, was an early attempt in this country to investigate the history of self-development in successive phases of religious opinion, without reference to the truth of either the Thirty-Nine Articles or any other fixed formulae. It was only one of the many services rendered to thought and letters by the same learned and ingenious man—the author, among many other wise things, of the deep saying, so well worth reading and reading over again, that what is important for us to know of any

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age, our own included, is not its peculiar opinions, but the complex elements of that moral feeling and character in which, as in their congenial soil, opinions grow.

This, however, is carrying us too far away. So far as Comtist influence went, it left me on the broad ledge where it stood planted by Mill and Littré — the two most important of his early adherents — Mill whom we all know, and Littré eminent in letters and in science, in the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. From the Positive Polity they by and by withdrew with reasoned attack. A curious change of estimate has attended Comte's Positive Philosophy both in his own country and in ours. It was working powerfully on British students and thinkers, at a time when it was scarcely named in France. Mazzini wrote to me in 1870 (like Louis Blanc, in English as good as yours or mine) "that he considered Comtism as a various reading, without the boldness of acknowledging it, of Materialism; as a fragment of Science, but only a fragment; as a most unintelligent appreciation of historical tradition; as an edifice without basis, like that of Aristophanes in the *Clouds*. His *Être Suprême* is an empty word, and his *Immortality* on the shelves of a library a farce. The school will vanish with Littré. I know and very much lament it is spreading in England, but it is the case of a dead voice: the last circle produced by a stone thrown in a lake, still apparent, while the stone itself is lying at the bottom, never more to reappear." The same hasty judgment was then held by many others.

Yet after all, in 1902 a monument was erected to Comte's memory in the precincts of the University of Paris, provided by subscriptions from nearly every country in the world, and formally accepted by notable members of the government of the French Republic. I find in the last estimate of

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Comte that has come in my way this conclusion of a critic so sound, competent, and sincere as Faguet: "He is the most powerful source of ideas, intellectual stimulator, of our century, and the greatest thinker, as I take it, that France has had since Descartes."

II

V. Hugo.

On the other side I was mastered by the literary Titan of that age, of whom it has been said by the latest poetic genius of our own time, that nobody who knows anything of poetry will dispute his being among the foremost in the front rank of the greatest poets of all time, and "the greatest writer whom the world has seen since Shakespeare." Such at least was Swinburne's eager verdict.

It may be that the reader of Victor Hugo to-day finds this a hard saying, but it is certain that he found glorious words for the highest hopes and dreams of Western Europe in his own age. I was an indifferent expert in judging his infinite command, resource, invention, in the forms of French verse. I could never bring myself to the singular climax of the poetic admirer who found Hugo's masterpiece in half a dozen lines exclusively composed of proper names. That did not prevent me from being stirred to the depths from first to last by the noble, tender, elevated, and pitying moral pulse that beat in his verse or prose. I may be forgiven for transcribing a letter that he wrote to the editor of the *Saturday* about an article of mine upon a book of his. It is easy to believe how a young apprentice in criticism was encouraged in his new calling:

April 18, 1866.—Je me suis fait traduire votre remarquable article sur les *Travailleurs de la Mer*. C'est là une page de haute et profonde critique. Jamais livre n'a été analysé avec plus de pénétration. L'auteur de l'article s'est assimilé toute la philosophie de l'œuvre qu'il a si

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admirablement compris. Je suis fier que mon livre soit présenté par un tel écrivain au public anglais. Remerciez, je vous prie, de ma part cet honorable et sympathique confrère. Son talent est un de ceux qui placent si haut la grande littérature anglaise. J'aime l'Angleterre, mon lieu d'asile, j'aime l'Angleterre de Shakespeare, de Newton, et de Wilberforce, et je suis heureux de me sentir en communion avec les nobles penseurs contemporains, dignes continuateurs de ces grands hommes.

I revelled in his other books as they appeared, and made his acquaintance one evening in days to come at his own fireside. By this time he had secured a royalty of station in the world's eye such as had fallen to no man of letters in France since the last years of Voltaire. His long dream of France a republic had at last come true. His many years of exile under our flag at Guernsey had given him the hale complexion of the sea, and he was of the sailor's build and air. No one else was there but Renan, just returned from Jerusalem. The old poet listened with quiet gravity, nodding his assent to the traveller's eager and picturesque story of the Greek and Latin Christians, only held from one another's throats by the bayonets of faithful Turkish sentries. It well fitted in with some of the veteran's cherished prepossessions, though Time and settled Glory had brought to him a measure of serenity.

III

Mazzini.

I have spoken of the illustrious French exile. The Italian exile was a source of influence hardly any less important to the growing generation whose minds were taking form and colour in the sixties. They were the two idols of Swinburne, and men less profuse in incense than he still paid them a homage that they half denied to domestic divinities, like Tennyson or Carlyle. Of Mazzini we may truly say what he said himself of Father

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Paul, the historian of the Council of Trent, that he was two distinct beings. He was sower of the seed, the indefatigable organiser, the conspirator, on behalf of the idea that he had invented and brought to life, of United Italy. Besides his ceaseless industry in this vexed sphere of action, his was the moral genius that spiritualised politics, and gave a new soul to public duty in citizens and nations. As practical statesman, when we have applauded him for the exalting political conception which his energy, ardour, and fire forced upon Italy and Europe, we have perhaps said all.

To understand how the realisation of his grand idea fell inevitably into other hands, we have only to consider some of his working maxims. Compromise, he said, is immoral, and often dangerous; general intuitions of the future are better guides, and place you on surer ground, than what are called tactics and practicalities; no path save the straight line; no false doctrines of expediency; no petty Machiavellis of the ante-chamber; political prudence is another name for mediocrity of intellect. And so forth in a terrible crescendo. Yet the transmutation of Mazzini's ideals into effective results was brought about by agents, to whom all these austere moralities were just as much "nonsense" as Plato was to Bentham. Strange agents of liberty and progress were comprised—Napoleon III., head of the most corrupt and essentially worthless government that a great nation ever chose or endured; Prince Napoleon, heir of some of the political brain and all the contempt for scruple of his uncle, the mighty soldier, of whom Talleyrand said that he was immorality incarnate; Victor Emanuel, a strong honest lover of the country and its cause, but on the surface, as they found him at Windsor, a wild and adventurous hunting Knight of the Fifteenth Century; Garibaldi, hero of the boldest and most romantic

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exploits outside the romances of his friend, Alexandre Dumas; last and greatest, Cavour, bold, persistent, far-sighted, subtle, with the true quality of the statesman, as Manzoni said of him, "the prudences and the imprudences," a prince among all the political calculators whom Mazzini most profoundly distrusted and abhorred. Here was the curiously united band who struck with such power the political imagination of their time, so ingeniously contrived the diplomatic forces, and in the end changed the geographic face of Europe.

There is no harm in seeking a concrete illustration to mark the difference between statesman and seer; I would turn for a moment from Mazzini as leader in the agitations of Italian resurrection, to three or four letters of that date written on the other shore of the Atlantic by Abraham Lincoln to impatient Abolitionists. How happy for Mazzini if he could have imitated the noble patience and plain reasoning of the President's reply (1862) to Greeley or the religious bodies, harrying him for the immediate issue of a proclamation of Emancipation. A few lines are not without bearing in all times of war, and even of peace:

> I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the divine will. . . . I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say, that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed he would reveal it directly to me, for it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it. These are not, however, the days of miracles, and it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. . . . The subject is difficult, and good men do not agree. . . . The rebel troops also are praying with a great deal more earnestness, I fear, than our own troops, and expecting God to favour their side. One of our soldiers who had been taken prisoner said that he met with nothing

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so discouraging as the evident sincerity of those he was among in their prayers. But we will talk over the merits of the case.

This is not the place for going through the list of Mazzini's misjudgments and perversities. History has settled them. He has his place in Castelar's famous sentences, how Hungarian autonomy was first preached by Kossuth, and realised by Deak, a conservative; republicans advocated the abolition of serfdom in Russia, a Czar realised it; republicans at Frankfort preached the unity of Germany, Bismarck realised it; in France a republic was the gospel of Hugo and Gambetta, consolidated by Thiers, a conservative. Cavour's counter-stroke to Garibaldi's occupation of Naples (1860) was an incomparable masterpiece of courage and calculation in a crisis where the difficulty was supreme. Our English cases are familiar. Those of us who could see only too clearly Mazzini's deficiency in affairs, still felt good reason for honour and gratitude to him as evangelist and prophet. In spite of loose and dangerous words about the dagger—in which the Jesuits had anticipated and eclipsed him—he stood for the voice of conscience in modern democracy. Of all the democratic gospellers of that epoch between 1848 and 1870, when Europe swarmed with them—they were so prolific, so ingenious, in schemes and doctrines, political, economic, and religious—it was Mazzini who went nearest to the heart and true significance of democracy. He had a moral glow, and the light of large historic and literary comprehension, that stretched it into the foremost place in the minds of men with social imagination enough to look for new ideals, and courage enough to resist the sluggard's dread of new illusions. He pressed his finger on the People's intellectual pulse and warned them against the feverish beats that came from words and phrases

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passed off as ideas, or, still more dangerous, from fragments of an idea treated as if they were the idea whole. He warned them that human history is not a thing of disconnected fragments, and that recollection of great moves and great men in the past is needed to keep us safe on the heights of future and present. He did more; though figuring as restorer of a single nation, he was as earnest as Kant himself in urging the moral relations between different States, and the supremacy and overlordship of cosmopolitan humanity.

The person of Mazzini has been drawn by a master hand in a beautiful and impressive scene upon the Monte Motterone, at the beginning of George Meredith's *Vittoria*. The writer took great pains with his work, for he was then on fire with the Italian spirit and its flame. He made it all magically alive to me, as of an evening in his Surrey cottage he read it aloud in its progress, with his best command of fine cadence and exulting emphasis. It was not a novelist's business to judge and analyse a dictator or his policy, but to paint the man in the company of high-hearted adorers. Mazzini had in him Italian elements that were as direct, severe, stern, as in Machiavelli himself, or even in the poet mightier than all other Italians. He could, it is true, be tender, sympathetic, wide and rich of vision. Nobody in London in those days was more impressive, or more seductive. He did not always strive to be just to those whom he believed to have sacrificed true wisdom to deceptive short cuts. I chanced to spend an evening with him when Garibaldi came to London in 1864, the hero of a popular reception well worthy of that strange wonder of the world. *Mazzini.* "Have you ever seen a lion?" *J. M.* "At the Zoological Gardens." *Mazzini.* "You know the face of a lion?" *J. M.* "Yes, without detail." *Mazzini.* "Is it not a foolish face? Is it not the face of Garibaldi?"—Sallies of

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unreason like this may well be set down to what Mazzini himself described as that "consumption of the soul," that "lingering death, the Hell of Exile," which only the exile himself can know. It was no small thing for that generation when the religious mysticism, of which the papacy had become the rather outworn incarnation, slowly changed into Mazzinian idealism.

IV

G. Sand.

The other foreign writer of the grand revolutionary school of that day, called by at least one supreme English critic the greatest literary force in Europe, was George Sand. Her genius was as unequal as it was prolific. But a religious romance of hers, though forgotten to-day, had powerful interest in its own time. *Mademoiselle la Quintinie* —such its name—was composed as a retort to a pro-clerical fantasy from the pen of a brilliant and skilful literary partisan. If it found you in a daylight mood, it acted as a stirring rebuke to loitering quietism of brain and all cowardice of soul, and had for me an interest that awoke the breath of fresh and more ardent energies for direct truth and its expression. I once had the honour of an appointment to pay a visit to her at Nohant, but by one of the cruel mischances of travel I missed it, and before another chance seemed to offer it was too late, for she was gone. No matter; personal communion was not needed to fan the glow of militant fervour kindled from that noble heart. Tocqueville only met her once, when he found himself placed next to her at table. It was on the eve of the terrible days of June in 1848. "I had strong prejudices against her," he says, "for I detest women who write, but she pleased me for all that. I found her features too heavy, but an admirable way of looking at you: her

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whole mind seemed to have gone into her eyes, leaving the rest of her face to matter; what struck me especially was to meet in her something of the natural *allure* of great minds. She had in fact true simplicity of manners and of language. It was the first time I entered into a direct and familiar conversation with one who could tell me what was going on in the enemy's camp. She painted in detail and with singular vivacity the state of the Paris workmen, their organisation, their numbers, their aims, their preparations, their thoughts, their passions, their terrible resolves. I thought the picture over-coloured, and it was not: what followed proved it all, only too plainly."

V

For ideas, definite thoughts, standards of truth, the masters to whom I went to school in the days of early manhood belonged mainly, though not entirely, to the opposite camp. Apart from the Oxford books read for a degree, apart from law-books read for a call to the Bar (and I still look back to them as an invaluable supplement to books on formal logic in planting concrete ideas as to evidence and proof), were Adam Smith, the Physiocrats, Bentham, Austin, Maine, Comte, Mill, Turgot. What shall I say of Burke? Only this, that at my first stage, when our foundations are laid, without prejudice to almost any of every later stage, I owed more to Burke for practical principles in the strategy and tactics of public life than to the others. When I count how little of the debt could ever be paid, I feel as if a fairly creditable stonecutter should presume to talk of what he owed to Michelangelo. Well might Macaulay exclaim, "The greatest man since Milton."

Everybody knows Carlyle's famous diatribes against the Bankrupt Eighteenth Century, all its

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works and all its men, save the heaven-sent Frederick the Great. The ten volumes of the *Frederick* (1858–65) added special and particular humiliations for the Frenchmen. The first of my French studies was Joseph de Maistre, the powerful genius whose implacable championship of reactionary principles, both in spiritual and temporal spheres, made him for a time so notable a figure in the history of European opinion. This gave something of a shock to what I may call the regulation free-thinkers of the *Fortnightly Review*, but I was privately refreshed by George Eliot's remark to a friend, that it showed a quite unexpected improvement in my *Wesen*, or mental disposition. Then Turgot—it was Mill who strongly urged me to write on this commanding brain and noble character. Well did the matured contemplation of such a personage, whether as historic thinker, wise counsellor, courageous statesman, or fighting the administrative battle for good government, repay the labours of the task. Here again my study on the great chief of what was to him a hostile school brought down a severe remonstrance from Louis Blanc, then a refugee in London, and my excellent and most interesting friend. I often had the privilege of a meal at his board. He was busily occupied on the history of the French Revolution, for which he found, as it happened, more abundant material at the British Museum than was then available in France itself. The precision of his speech matched his turn for clean-cut republican and socialist dogma; he assured me that he and his brother, Charles Blanc, were the only two writers and speakers who were absolutely unerring masters in all the niceties of their native tongue. His wife was German, with so dubious a French accent that they agreed on English, which he spoke with as much ease as myself. No unpleasant feature was the company at the dinner

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of the homely Frenchwoman who had prepared it. Louis Blanc condemned Turgot root and branch as marking the triumph of individualism over fraternity, and overlooking the sacred right to work. Turgot, he said, wanted the poor to be left free to develop their faculties, but he never admitted that society owed them provision of the means. In after years I sometimes thought of Turgot, when I happened to be the intendant of a Limoges in an island nearer home, with some difficulties of its own. As for the quarrel between Fraternity and Right to Work, that, too, grew to be one of the stiffest perplexities in days to come. I replied to Louis Blanc as gently as might be, that if he and his allies in 1848 had learned a little more from Turgot, France would have escaped the alarming and disastrous experiment of National Workshops, and he need not have been a refugee nor Napoleon III. an Emperor.

On Turgot's grave name I would fain add another word. Some later writers on the sunset of the Monarchy in France argue that Necker had a better eye for actual needs. It was either Hume or Adam Smith who said of him, with personal knowledge, that he was not a man of the world enough, and did not allow enough for human nature. Be that as it may, Turgot was a rare type, model, and abiding influence. He was one of those masters and inspirers of large and true ideas, whose adoption is deepened by the impression of their character on those who have in younger days sincerely felt it. Men need not be envied who, in the voyage of their lives, are not silently conscious in meditative hours of their working days of some high figure who first placed chart and compass in their hands—both in respect of civil conscience for the day and definite thoughts of history, progress, perfectibility, and the rest. Turgot was for me such a figure. So was Condorcet. Mill was another.

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Well has it been said: "The μαθητής is a distinct character. Like most human things discipleship has its good and its evil, its strong and its poor and dangerous side; but it really has a good and a strong side; . . . its manly and reasonable humility, the enthusiasm of having and recognising a great master; and doing what he wanted done" (*Dean Church*). As the Dean's praise and dispraise seem to be balanced, I may be forgiven for saying I do not think I have known many men with a better share of this true spirit of discipleship than one of whom George Meredith once said in a humour for generous exaggeration: "He bows the head to no man."

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CHAPTER VI

CONTESTS OF THE HOUR

The judgment which my literary companions passed on life was to the effect that life in general is in a state of progress, and that in this development we, the men of letters, take the principal part. . . . It used to appear to me that the small number of cultivated rich and idle men composed the whole of humanity, and that the millions and millions of other men who had lived and were still living were not in reality men at all.—TOLSTOY.

Light half-believers of our casual creeds.—M. ARNOLD.

I

IN a discussion one day a leading French writer, after laying it down that the *Encyclopédie* was the central book of the eighteenth century in France, and the writings of Port Royal as central in the seventeenth, bade us look in the nineteenth for the Reviews. That is to say, these are the three centres for the best observation of fresh flowing currents of thought, interest, and debate. The *Fortnightly* for a time seemed to hold this place.[1] It was to be expected that the gospel of free intellectual and social expansion, now exciting minds capable of seeing how far it went, should seek a fresh organ of independent thought. By the influence of Morison, I was appointed to succeed George Henry Lewes, that wonder of versatile talents, as editor of the *Fortnightly*. This is thought by authors with a right to judge to have a marked place in the history of our periodical literature, as well as in the diffusion and encouragement of

[1] *The Idea of Progress*, by Professor J. B. Bury, p. 163 (1920).

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rationalistic standards in things spiritual and temporal alike. The time had come for it. During the fifteen years (1867–82) in which it fell under my charge, our miscellany of writers and subjects was soon taken by prejudiced observers to disclose an almost sinister unity in spirit and complexion. This unity was in fact the spirit of Liberalism in its most many-sided sense. Chilly welcome was extended to those promiscuous persons whom Treitschke found so terribly numerous at the present day—who will offer you now a remark on the Sistine Madonna, now an opinion on Bonapartism, now an observation on the steam-engine—" seldom anything absolutely stupid, but more seldom still anything shrewdly to the point." Yet the genial can certainly not have been altogether banished from pages that were honoured with work from Arnold, Swinburne, Meredith, Gabriel Rossetti, Bagehot, Huxley, Pater, Lewes, Harrison, Dicey, Leslie Stephen, Pattison, Myers.

For serious thinking on his own subjects, nobody was more acceptable than J. E. Cairnes, of whom Mill said that he had that rare qualification among writers on political social subjects — a genuine scientific intellect. Long did we regret the too early loss of his manly companionship, where facts were so carefully weighed and conclusions stated with such just measure. Even the great stolid idols of the Cave and the Market were never too rudely buffeted, for he came from northern Ireland. A contributor of still rarer mark was Bagehot, whose quality I had recognised and enjoyed when I read his *Estimates* in early literary days. His *Physics and Politics*, the *English Constitution*, and some other pieces, were published in our pages. In public things he did not really share the notions or the aims of younger men, but he took abundant interest in friends more ardent than himself. His good-natured ironies put them on their mettle.

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He was cool and sceptical about political improvement, was not the least an orthodox Millite, was a very hesitating Gladstonian, was wholly averse from French enthusiasms, and he had even whitewashed Napoleon's *coup d'État* of 1852. What effect Sedan had upon this unlucky shot I do not know. I often ventured to say to him, "You have only one defect; you do not feel the inherent power and glory of the principle of Liberty." This notwithstanding, we who dissented most from his maxims on current affairs were well aware how much better we were for his Socratic objections, and what real acquaintance with men and business, what serious judgment and interest, what honest sympathy and friendliness, all lay under his playful and racy humour. One distinguished man has named him as compeer of Montesquieu. Here, however, as in the talk of comparing Goethe and George Eliot, one must be a little careful. "O Montesquieu," cried Bentham, "the British Constitution whose death thou prophesiedest will live longer than thy work, yet not longer than thy fame. Locke—dry, cold, languid, wearisome—will live for ever. Montesquieu—rapid, brilliant, glorious, enchanting—will not outlive his century. He must die as his great countryman, Descartes, had died before him. He must wither as the blade withers when the corn is ripe." A true image which the reader of the great books of the world does well to take to heart. It may be true that Montesquieu was a precursor, not a founder; but his thoughts had the signal quality of powerful and immediate bearing on political action and the requirements of political construction. It is no disparagement of Bagehot to say that his two main writings, luminous, original, penetrating, and suggestive as they are, make no such contribution as did Montesquieu to the right methods of studying the mighty spheres of politics, constitutions, governing, law-making.

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The latest historian of English rationalism in the nineteenth century[1] says that if any one year can be specified as that in which it reached its most intense expression, 1877 is the date. Nearly every number of the *Fortnightly*, he adds, during the second half of that year, contained an attack by some powerful writer, either on theology as a whole, or on some generally accepted article of theological belief. That is quite true. In the sixteenth century Scottish theological faction was divided between Puritanism with the chill on and with the chill off. Our *Review* was Rationalism without chill, in one sense, though with much of it in another. People quarrelled for a short season whether we should be labelled Comtist, Positivist, Naturalist. They were conscious of a certain concurrence in the writers, though it was not easy to define. Everything that the illuminating explanation of all things on earth and in the heavens above the earth by Evolution could be stretched to bring within its sphere, was pressed through our ordeal. Evolution was passed on from the laboratory and the study to the parlour, and the eternal riddles that a dozen years before had been proposed and answered, and then in their crudest form, in obscure debating societies and secularist clubs, now lay upon the table with the popular magazines. This was by no means pure gain, for perhaps eternal riddles are not best studied by the month. When Washington Irving came to England in 1822, he was surprised to find with what readiness men of letters were welcomed in genteel circles; he was delighted with evening parties in which rank, talent, and fashion were blended, "where you find the most distinguished people of the day in literature, art, and science, brought into familiar communion with leading statesmen and ancient nobility." In the late years of the century, the new movements of

[1] *History of English Rationalism*, by A. W. Benn. 2 vols. (1906).

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thought made this sociability still more extensive. Modern nobility was as affable as ancient, and West-End mansions and country houses became in their own way like the salons of Paris a hundred years before. In Paris the fine ladies made themselves judges, and not bad judges, of the things of the intellect; what was called philosophy was never so much admired, protected, spoiled; and the pet of the supper-tables was the greatest of Scottish metaphysicians. In England, too, Scottish metaphysicians of both camps presented discussion on philosophic themes in its most fascinating aspect. Such was the less austere side of the more serious change in the education of women. Thirty years later a well-placed French observer of London drawing-rooms noted a new type of English gentleman—with a politeness that was rather cold, a courtesy made up of self-esteem more than of cordiality towards other people, with marked solicitude for interests of the positive sort, and joining the refinements of high life with the preoccupations of affairs of business. These too had their share in miscellaneous discussion of the enigmas of human life.

No article that has appeared in any periodical for a generation back (unless it be Deutsch's article on the Talmud in the *Quarterly* of 1867) excited so profound a sensation as Huxley's memorable paper On the Physical Basis of Life (1869). The stir was like the stir that in a political epoch was made by Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*, or Burke's *French Revolution*. This was in England, in the essence of its most active curiosity, the scientific epoch, the time of new forces, discovery, mechanical invention. The favourite poet of the time sang that there was more faith in honest doubt than in half your creeds, and awoke a long train of uneasy thought by the sombre reminder that Nature with ravine is red in tooth and claw. When

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all this free-spoken and extremely competent dissent from orthodoxy came to be found in company with ideas on social and political renovation of various sorts, the combination awoke a trifle of discomfort in the old hands of the political world. They are usually apt to think as Napoleon did of men of letters: "Ce sont des coquettes avec lesquelles il faut entretenir un commerce de galanterie, et dont il ne faut jamais songer à faire ni sa femme ni son ministre." It is amusing, as we read the newspapers to-day, to think that Harrison's powerful defence of Trades Unions only thirty or forty years ago caused the *Review* to be regarded as an incendiary publication. Some papers of my own on National Education were thought to indicate a deliberate plot for suppressing the Scriptures. These extravagant misjudgments passed away. But it was far from being a mistake to suppose that the line taken by many writers did mean that there was a new Liberalism in the air.

In the heats of public life at a later day, my French studies once brought down Goschen's reproach, at a large political meeting (1888), that I was "the St. Just of our revolution," and loud applause rewarded his platform sally. How many in a hundred had ever heard of St. Just, and how many in a thousand could have told any three facts of his career, one could only guess. It would have done just as well to talk of Nero, Bluebeard, Torquemada. When in the fulness of time I hinted at Welsh Disestablishment as an article for the party programme, or at the modest principle of One Man One Vote—which as it happened I reintroduced into our workaday politics—it appeared that I found my models in the heroes of the French Revolution, "and in my secret heart looked for my methods in the Reign of Terror." Those studies were, in fact, no more than an attempt to remind people of the place of French literature between

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Bayle and Rousseau in the progress of European emancipation. The ordinary summary in men's minds of this immense and devious stage was a march from the universal Church to the Reformation; thence direct to the French Revolution; and so on to Napoleon, Goethe, and the Reform Bill of 1832.

II

It would be graceless indeed of me to forget the long series of short volumes on English Men of Letters, in which so many competent hands took a part. It was my honour to wield the conductor's baton over a band, selected not without much thought from among the most accomplished writers of their time. We naturally had much discussion as to the title of the series, for to call Milton, Hume, Burke, Bacon, men of letters was absurd. I may say a word on this later. Meanwhile the output was a useful contribution to knowledge, criticism, and reflection, and bringing all these three good things within reach of an extensive, busy, and preoccupied world. It has been unkindly observed that our age, "though largely occupied in talking about literature, has produced little criticism of the first order." I am much inclined to demur when I recall a dozen volumes of this series, and add to them a half-dozen names of critics who are not in that list.

Editorial supervision was no child's play. Harsh were the binding necessities of time and space, and heart-breaking was it to present an editorial demand for sacrifice of slice upon slice of admirable work, where limits were inexorable. Even the most ardent votaries of truth and beauty cannot be expected to escape all the infirmities of human nature; even philosophers, savants, historians, prose penmen in every branch, are liable to moments

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when they share the ill name given by good-natured Horace to writers of verse as an irritable breed. We had our cruel moments. Conductor and performers mingled their tears, but we dried them, we suppressed our execrations, and bowed to an ill-fortune that was common. One who was perhaps the most brilliant workman and personally attractive of them all, now and again startled me by a sudden change in the opening of a letter from the usual geniality of address to the frost of "Dear Sir," but the petulance was momentary, though recurrent. I found little or none of that contention for the last word which is the bane of human relations. As I recall the men who worked with our publishers and me on the list, what high repute they had earned, with what interests and aims in more roomy and far-reaching fields they had fought their way through the world, I cannot but perceive that after so long intercourse with such men, nobody in England could have been more destitute of excuse than myself for a narrow mind or a cynic's temper.

III

In its seeming diversity my writing before I went into Parliament offers a target only too ample for critics in an adverse humour, and I might well shrink from a verdict of any concentrated sage of a solitary book, or the champion of some one paramount public cause. Experience of men and life, I hope, was not thrown away. Such story as there is, was the developed application of principles on the demand of successive occasions as they arose.

As to literary form, I took too little thought, only trying to follow Aristotle's dictum that the essence of style is to be correct and clear without being mean or meagre—*σαφῆ καὶ μὴ ταπεινήν*. In the verbal curiosity contemned by Milton as toil-

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some vanity I had little interest. I was inclined respectfully to go with Montaigne, who laughed at fools who will go a quarter of a league to run after a fine word. Yet here, as in other things, it is well not to hurry to be over-positive. Hazlitt is not wrong when he says there is "a great deal more of research in choice of a plain than of an ornamental or learned style. There may be ten synonyms, yet only one that exactly answers to the idea we have in our minds." Whether the hunt be for a plain word or a fine one, it is less material than the excision of superfluous words, of connecting particles, introductory phrases, and the like things, that seem more trivial for a reader's comfort than they are. In a larger sense than this, how sagacious was Schiller's saying that "an artist may be known rather by what he *omits*." A wholesome secret even for men of letters with pretensions to be artists.

Diderot, my gay and confident companion for many a month, asking of painting what is its true aim and reason, declares painting is an address not to the eyes alone by colour, light, figure, but to heart and mind. "Without technique, no painting, to be sure; but when all is said, I like ideas and the rendering and interpretation of them better than colour." What this effusive genius said of painting has even stronger significance in the arts of writing, whether it be literature of knowledge or literature of power; whether verse or imaginative prose, or prose without imagination. Heart and mind on both sides—there is the secret. Johnson, as usual, hit the mark when he said of Sir Thomas Browne and *Religio Medici* that his unique peculiarity of mind was faithfully reflected in the form and matter of his work. Faithful reflection —this is where the Stylist, most provoking of literary degenerates, breaks down. He provokes because he takes endless trouble, is inexhaustible in strange devices of image and verbal collocation,

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invents ingenious standards of precision, takes nothing plain from heart and mind—only to bring upon his work that sense of insincerity and affectation which is mortal sin in every art, as it is in our common actual life outside of art.

If we rashly venture on the overworked theme of style, there are of course as many styles as there are ages, nations, matters, personal moods, relations, great leading minds, motives. History has advanced with powerful stride to a commanding place within the last forty or fifty years, and a vigorous contest now stimulates and entertains us as to the true genius of the historic Muse, or whether she be a Muse at all, or only kitchen drudge; whether a Science reducing great bodies of detail to concentrated and illuminating Law, or that very different thing, an Epic Art, a source of bright and living popular influence.

Of poetry, Dryden, that splendid master of prose, has said that "its general end is to instruct delightfully." But this is too narrow, and is only true by leave of the reader, and the reader's general end is various, in poetry and prose—amusement, pleasure, melody, imaginative flight, recall of moving associations, and the rest of men's humours ill covered by the name of instruction. Delightful poets have said curious things about their art. Coleridge could never discover "anything *sublime* in our sense of the term in classical Greek; sublimity is Hebrew by birth." Surely a shade too narrow. Some fear that the Artificial and the Exquisite is gaining ground among both critics and composers. Nobody has yet either in England or France come near in the scale of artificial verse or prose to the excellent bishop in the eighth century who devoted some months to composing thirty-five verses of prayer for Charlemagne, which when read perpendicularly, horizontally, and along the lines of an inscribed rhomboid, gave eight other acrostic

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verses to the same effect. But the modern artificial does seem occasionally to come perilously near to the nebulous and unmeaning. At any rate, my reader will make allowances for one's natural tenderness towards books and styles that time has tested. However this may be, sensible men do not suffer their predilections in this region—so accidental as half of them are—to grow into tyrannical exclusives, but will consider what has been in so fine a picture put by Taine. The human mind, he says, flows with events, like a river. "From one hundred leagues to another hundred leagues, the land changes; here broken mountains and all the poetry of savage nature; further on long avenues of mighty trees with their roots in all the violence of the stream; lower down great regular plains and noble horizons disposed as for delight of the eye; there the swarming ant-hills of thronged towns with the beauty of fruitful labour. The traveller as he sails down the changing stream is wrong to regret or take little heed of scene after scene, as he leaves them behind one after the other." True of the world, and true for the man. And I think, too, of that most delicate writer among all my writing friends, who said, "In truth the legitimate contention is not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form" (*Pater*).

IV

My profession carried me into many fields. I followed sedulously the course of home and foreign affairs in the pages of the *Review*, and I had to seize the flying topics as they passed. It was my business besides in different ways to provoke, supervise, direct, and measure the work of others.

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I wrote books on Voltaire, Rousseau (1874), and Diderot (1878). The appreciation of Voltaire was summary, and was in truth a suggestion for people with unfounded pretensions to literary education, that he was a writer on whom they ought to leave a card. "Voltaire," said Jowett, with some boldness, "has done more good than all the Fathers of the Church put together." In those days the hint was useful. Of the two last of them a leading French critic, himself of the Catholic school and therefore free from personal predilections, benevolently said that along with the writings of Strauss and Rosencrantz, they were worth more than any books in French on the same subjects. Since then, I am sure, the international balance may well have shifted. Rousseau and the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot stand, of course, for signal chapters in literary and social history. Of Diderot I then said that, as I replaced in my shelves his mountain of volumes, I had a presentiment that their pages would seldom again be disturbed by me or others, yet they were no mere monumental ruin, a wrecked shape of stone and sterile memories, but the grey walls of an ancient stronghold, whence stout hands had once gone forth to strike a blow for knowledge and truth. They were, in fact, a powerful forerunner of the move for intellectual emancipation that gradually took the shape and name of what Newman denounced as Liberalism. The *Encyclopédie* was the substitution of interest in things for interest in words; enthusiasm for productive industry, physical science, the practical arts, as the right relief to people tired of metaphysics and theological combats. Great French critics have called it the most important book of the eighteenth century, as they give the same rank to Descartes in the seventeenth. However that may be, Diderot's independent writings on art, pictures, the drama, philosophy, are an extraordinary display of diversified

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original and sympathetic genius, abundant to confusion, and not seldom stained by incredible defilement, but offering many a page of stimulating contribution to thought and feeling. Rousseau was different. It was in social feeling that he struck a new note; just as his famous friend or enemy, David Hume, struck a new note in fathoming other mysteries. My book before and perhaps after revision was too long and too argumentative; its point of view not historic enough in its spirit, and certainly it had but little trace of Rousseau's own wondrous gift of the golden mouth. It fitted in, however, with a great rising impulse of the time in the problems of all times—government, education, religion, labour, the home; and in presenting Rousseau it did something to quicken, justify, and expand into active energy the social pity and fraternal sympathy that must ever be the warm emotions best worth living for. Before her days of authorship (1849) a friend expressed surprise at George Eliot's delight in the *Confessions*. "I wish you to understand," she replied in self-defence—

> that the writers who have most profoundly interested me—who have rolled away the waters from their bed, raised new mountains and spread delicious valleys for me—are not in the least oracles to me. It is just possible that I may not embrace one of their opinions—that I may wish my life to be shaped quite differently from theirs. For instance it would signify nothing to me if a very wise person were to stun me with proofs that Rousseau's views of life, religion, and government are miserably erroneous. . . . I might admit all this, and it would be not the less true that Rousseau's genius has sent that electric thrill through my intellectual and moral frame which has awakened me to new perceptions—which has made man and nature a world of freer thought and feeling to me; and this not by teaching me any new belief. It is simply that the rushing mighty wind of his inspiration has so quickened my faculties that I have been able to shape more definitely for myself ideas which had previously dwelt as dim *Ahnungen* in my soul.

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It would have been well for me if I could have known these high truth-speaking words before I began my book. They are a silver key for critics. To-day the examination of Rousseau as a constitution-monger is being conducted among us with sedulous interest, but his unspeakable effect was really due not at all to juristic novelties, but to feeling. These French studies were intended for an introduction to English miscellaneous readers of the points in the era of *Aufklärung* and emancipation across the Channel, not wholly distant from that which was fast ripening at home. It made all the difference whether the young man started with Rousseau or with Schopenhauer, and I am bound to think, if we have to choose, the first is better for a Liberal career in life and thought than the other.

V

More pointed and direct was my little volume on *Compromise* (1874), an essay on some of the limits that seemed to be set by sound reason to the various arts of economy, accommodation, management, conformity. A prefatory motto was taken in Archbishop Whately's plain-spoken sentence: "*It makes all the difference in the world whether we put Truth in the first place or in the second place.*" It was the age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiplied doubts and shaken beliefs. What was well called the margin of difficulty in the case of religious conformity provoked inevitable discussion, and my chapters opened some portions of the field. Privy Council judgments and other things had planted good men on a narrow knife-edge of conscience. Newman in well-known words had drawn such men: "Mistiness is the mother of wisdom. A man who can set down half a dozen general propositions which escape from destroying one

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another only by being diluted into truisms; who can hold the balance so skilfully as to do without fulcrum or beam; who never enunciates a truth without guarding himself against being supposed to exclude the contradictory; who holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet that the Church is to be deferred to. . . . This is your safe man." Mill said the same: "In the present age the writers of reputation and influence are those who take something from both sides of the great controversies, and make out that neither extreme is right, nor wholly wrong." This was in 1854, the eve of a sweeping turn of the tide. For a season, literature was a weapon and an arm, not merely a liberal art.

If mistiness was a mischief in one field, the subordination of truth and principle to political or individual expediency from day to day was another. Well might one ask whether absurdity could go further than when the most important of newspapers criticised Darwin's speculations on the descent of man, from the point of view of property and a stake in the country, and severely censured him for revealing his zoological conclusions to the general public at a moment when the sky of Paris was red with the incendiary flames of the Commune. Anybody can see that thus to discourage the search for enlightenment and truth by thoughts of transient social convenience, is only a step removed from the dire offences so freely imputed to Casuists and Jesuits. The truths of man's descent must be scrupulously concealed, lest he should set fire to St. Paul's and slay the Bishop of London. A single step, moreover, would take us to the immortal dictum that *the Real is Rational*, which has led, as we know, to such formidable politics with the label of Real in all the diplomatic Chanceries of Europe. So it seemed then to be well worth while to use some open words about both Neo-Christianity and

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Neo-Machiavellianism. The essay was no plea for a life of perpetual dispute and busy proselytising, but only that we should learn to look at one another with steadfast eye, marching with steady step along the paths we choose. This is a commonplace, and nobody denies it. But then such commonplaces are just what most constantly need new application. The little book was meant to search some of the sophisms by which sound commonplace was evaded. At all events, to travel over familiar ground can hardly be counted either sin or foolishness by those who preach and those who hear thousands of discourses on texts from the best-known of all books every seventh day each week. I did not forget an old saying of my own, that used to give pleasure to Fitzjames Stephen, that love of truth is often a true name for temper! Swift put it more broadly: "Violent zeal for truth," he said, "has a hundred to one odds to be either petulancy, ambition, or pride." I once imprudently puzzled, and perhaps scandalised, an academic audience at Edinburgh by referring to a friend of mine whose happy fortune it had been to know many leading men of his time, and who assured me he did not think he could count more than five of them as really unsparing lovers of truth. The list has escaped my memory. It means, I suppose, men permanently out of the bronze prison doors of formulae; able to discern possible good in the motives and acts of those whom they mark for wrong in feeling and opinion; doubtful of any proposition as either true or not true, unless you have taken pains to master its contrary. Was Strauss, author of the once famous *Life of Jesus*, right when he declared *Bildung überhaupt ist Vermittelung*, Culture before all else is conciliation and accommodation?

The little book was probably needed, for it found much acceptance and made a long impression.

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According to a German writer who translated it under the title of *Ueberzeugungstreue* with elaborate annotations some years later (1879), its doctrine was even more required in his country than in mine, rather to my astonishment. In India it had a certain vogue, and found its unexpected way into Urdu and Gujerati.

VI

It was only natural that objection should be taken. I was described as "a writer who preter-calmly, sub-silently, super-persuasively, but subtly and potently, is exercising influence on the most advanced and most earnest thought of the present generation; who by a refined, destructive criticism is solving the faith of thousands, is not contributing an iota to the reconstruction of a systematic body of thought which can help the educator in floating the tiniest skiff on the troubled waters of life." To produce a systematic body of thought was far beyond either capacity or ambition of mine. I aspired to be no more than "a comrade in the struggle for thought" and the wrestle for truth. Orthodoxy, while disparaging reason, and banishing it to a distant place behind and under faith, was rightfully glad to have reason on its side. Why should silence be an obligation in one camp more than in the other? As for religious belief, there was nothing sub-silent or subtle in some pages in which I spoke of Chaumette, one of the least estimable of terrorist Jacobins, and reproached him for his way of substituting for the imposing, solemn, consolatory ceremonials of the Church a detestably gaudy and essentially meaningless paganism. It drew some attention, and it was a word in season:

"Our opinions," I said, "are not more important than the spirit and temper with which they possess us. . . . It would be far better to share the superstitious

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beliefs of a virtuous and benignant priest like the bishop in Victor Hugo's *Misérables*, than to hold whatever was truer in the opinions of Chaumette as he held them with ravening intolerance, and a shallow forgetfulness of all that part of our nature that lies out of the immediate domain of the logical understanding. . . . Instead of defying the Church by the theatrical march of the Goddess of Reason under the great sombre arches of Notre Dame, he should have found comfort in a firm calculation of the conditions. . . . We will not attack you as Voltaire did; we shall not exterminate you; we shall explain you. History will place your dogmas in its class, above or below a hundred competing dogmas, exactly as the naturalist classifies his species. From being a guide to millions of lives, it will become a chapter in a book. The mental climate will gradually deprive your symbols of their nourishment, and men will turn away from your system, not because they have confuted it, but because like witchcraft or astrology it has ceased to affect or hold them."

It is true, however, the believer had a good reply so far as it went. You will never explain, as you call it, he might have said, without sympathetic appreciation, without the element of light that men call love, without some quietness and workings of the heart. Yes, that was all true and memorably true. But then it was the day of battle and the hour for plain speaking. The provocation was not one-sided. Huxley, a close and constant friend of mine, pointing out that the business of carrying the war into the hostile camp of false and adulterated metaphysics languished like other campaigns for want of a good base of operations, went on to say that (1873) "in the course of the last fifty years science had brought to the front an inexhaustible supply of heavy artillery of a new pattern; things were looking better; though hardly more than the first faint flutterings of the dawn of the happy day when superstition and false metaphysics shall be no more, are as yet discernible by the *enfans perdus* of the outposts." Huxley was hard-fighting leader in the battle, unsurpassed in

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his time as a master in the union of clear and forcible thought with extraordinary perspicuity of expression. His object was set forth with manful clearness, "to promote the increase of natural knowledge, and to further the application of scientific investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, is stripped off." If all this is less a word in season to-day than it was then, it is only because the climate has changed, and changed in the direction that makes mankind the Providence of men. I know that at least to one of the most powerful minds of that day, most definitely positivist, and a very direct contributory to a negative propagandism, it seemed just (1862) to condemn antagonism to religious doctrines as "robbing" men of their belief, and to revolt against all such robbery. Yet let us take care. The reproach easily cuts both ways. Nobody, I should think, would apply this repugnant word to the band of missionaries, those pacific crusaders, whose pious devotion and unselfish zeal for the salvation of heathen souls, from Xavier and Nobili down to our actual hour, is commonly taken for one of the most glorious chapters in Christian annals. In this field, too, as at home, unholy compromisers were not a few, and the Pope had to issue a brief reproving missionaries who sought converts in India by themselves adopting Brahmin doctrines, putting on Brahmin apparel, and tracing on their Catholic brows the coloured marks of Brahmin caste.

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VII

In 1874 Mill's posthumous essay on Theism appeared—a piece that dismayed his disciples not merely as an infelicitous compromise with orthodoxy, but, what was far more formidable, as actually involving a fatal relaxation of his own rules and methods of reasoning. It made a sort of intellectual scandal, like the faith of Pascal, that most intrepid of reasoners, in the unspeakable miracle of the Holy Thorn. It seemed a duty to keep the agnostic lamps well trimmed. I made no attempt to argue with the mystic or the transcendentalist, but only with the rationalist master of those who know, on rationalistic ground expressly chosen and profoundly impressed by himself. What pain and sorrow it was thus to lay hands upon my father Parmenides any one will believe who has ever known a teacher like Mill, colouring the lessons of a trained and powerful understanding with a suffusion of the charmed equanimity by the Greeks called χάρις. Without irreverence be it said, the essay that wrought so surprisingly upon us was in substance a laboured evasion of plain answers to plain questions. Of these the central one was vividly put by Man Friday to Robinson Crusoe—Why did not God kill the Devil ?—one of the master interrogatories of human speculation. It has a host of momentous propositions dependent on it. Mill's answer to poor Friday's puzzle comes shortly put to this. First, there is a low degree of probability that the world is the work of a Creator, not omnipotent, but of limited power, and he cannot kill the Devil. Second, Benevolence is one of his attributes, but not his sole prompter. Third, there is room to hope that he may grant us the gift of life after bodily dissolution, provided that this gift should seem to him in his divine wisdom to be likely to do us any good. Fourth, supernatural

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intervention, special, express, and unique, conferred on mankind the priceless gift of Christ, standing in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom the species can boast, and the greatest moral reformer that ever existed on earth. So, in short, the dogmatic assertion of creeds, faiths, and ardently professed convictions, that are taken to guide, illuminate, and glorify the life of Christendom, is reduced from full shining noon to a dim twilight of bare possibilities and blenched peradventures.

Mill's estimate of the founder of Christianity is a glowing, beautiful, and deeply sincere tribute. Unfortunately for its strength as argument, he overlooked one of the most remarkable new growths of his time, the science of comparative religion. If he did not overlook comparative religion, he dissociated his speculation on Theism from methods of ordered historic thought and knowledge, with which it was specially connected. He had forgotten or overlooked the shock given to orthodox faith only seven years before by a Jewish scholar, who showed that the sublimest sayings in the Gospels found exact parallels in the Talmud. The originality, however, of the lessons taught to mankind in the Gospels is a question with only secondary bearings on the source of that benignant inspiration, whether it was altogether human or partially divine. What became of the whole scheme of social evolution in its successive stages fixed by ordered mutation, if one of the most important of all the changes in moral history was due to a special, express, and unique act of supernatural intervention? Why may not the same special interposition be just as reasonably claimed for Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hildebrand, Knox, and the rest of the mighty actors in spiritual and ecclesiastical transformations, by whom what bears the common name of Christianity has been defined, decided, settled, and set to work in the

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stupendous phalanx of Catholic and Protestant churches?

On the greater issue than even this, Mill represents the Manichean doctrine as the only form of belief in the supernatural that stands wholly clear of imputing moral obliquity to the Supreme Being. This supreme merit it has, because it denies his omnipotence. That is to say, the world is a field of constant battle between two rival agencies, two principles, one good, the other evil, one sprung from light, the other a mysterious emanation from darkness. It is a theatre of persistent conflict between the Most High and a potent Satan. Be this as it may, think as we will of this theory of Olympian dualism between beneficent and malignant divinities, our consternation in those days arose from the path along which Mill travelled to this particular form of theistic conclusion. He, who had done more than anybody to make language, conceptions, reasoned argument, into instruments of precision, was now for flatly sanctioning one of the hardest of mystic propositions. Mill once said to a friend afflicted by a sore domestic tribulation, "To my mind the only permanent value of religion is in lightening the feeling of total separation, which is so dreadful in a real grief." If you will. But can we really suppose that this scheme of possible contingencies, low degrees of probability, permissive hopes, dubious potentialities, could bring comfort or consolation worth the name to aching hearts—

> In shock of loss and anguish of farewells,
> At that eternal parting of the ways?

After all death is death, however we may meet it. As we cannot but see every day we live, even religion fails to wipe away their tears from the eyes of those to whom religion is the most priceless of blessings. We know well enough that problems of life and death offer us a knot that is hard indeed

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to disentangle. Mill here cuts it, then at the same moment he presents us with a second knot that is still harder to disentangle than the first.

We may in justice to Mill recall what Harnack says of the great attraction exercised by Manicheism on the deeper spirits in the fourth century. "Anyone who was determined to cast away leading-strings and examine things freely for himself; anyone who sought to know what inner principle holds the world together; anyone who strove to grasp the constitution of the spiritual world and the problem of evil — became in those days a Manichean." But then those days were now fifteen centuries off.

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CHAPTER VII

LEADING CONTEMPORARIES

The greatest error of all the rest is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge. For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite, sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason for the benefit and use of men. As if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace with a fair prospect . . . but not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate. But this is that which will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly confirmed and united together than they have been.—BACON, *Advancement of Learning*, 1605.

I

Herbert Spencer.

THE head of the Agnostic school on its philosophic and systematic side was, of course, Herbert Spencer. His public influence on educated and uneducated minds was daily extending as his work grew larger. It was associated not merely with a special set of philosophic principles and their application, but with a great scheme of thought as a whole, and with a series of direct practical application that came home to people every day of their lives. A new general scheme on a scale so comprehensive has attractions of its own, especially as it would appear for new countries like America and Russia, and for Japan and India, ancient communities looking forward to new lights. Invincible is the attraction of Synthesis, and Synthesis was Spencer's glory,

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backed by an undisputed range of scientific knowledge.

As for Liberalism, Spencer did not fit in at close quarters with the old expiring controversies. He had besides the disadvantage, compared with Mill, of being without administrative experience in any responsible shape, but he carried two at least of its main tenets, individualism and energetic abhorrence of war, to their furthest points. The repudiation of convention was even deeper in him than in Mill, and he was sometimes thought to be travelling dangerously far along the road to an anti-social Nihilism. Among other innocent conventions that he resisted, he read no books. There is something no doubt to be said for this in one aspiring to found a system. There are men who have lost themselves by reading too much. They find that everything has been said. "It is after all the ignorant," observed the best-read man of our time, "like Pascal, like Descartes, like Rousseau, who had read little, but who thought and who dared—those are the men who make the world go." But this is perhaps a secret better kept for the household of Socrates.

Inexorable and uncompromising in his ideas, he was in life, conduct, and duty the most single-minded and unselfish of men. He had a pedantic turn, his nerves were sensitive, and he was not one of the large minds in which small outside things have no place. He could be impatient over the small mischances of club life, and he was amusingly ready to seek an instant classification of them as due to gross defects of integration, co-ordination, or whatever else the attendant molecular shortcoming might be. He had a passion for industrialism against militarism, for non-aggression and non-intervention, and for abolition of ecclesiastical privilege. Argument with him on these high matters was not easy; in my own case it was happily needless, for we agreed. The only time that I recall anything

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like monologue at Mill's table, Spencer was the involuntary hero. The host said to him at dessert that Grote, who was present, would like to hear him explain one or more of his views about the equilibration of molecules in some relation or another. Spencer, after an instant of good-natured hesitation, complied with unbroken fluency for a quarter of an hour or more. Grote followed every word intently, and in the end expressed himself as well satisfied. Mill, as we moved off into the drawing-room, declared to me his admiration of a wonderful piece of lucid exposition. Fawcett in a whisper asked me if I understood a word of it, for he did not. Luckily I had no time to answer. Away from the contention of the moment, Spencer was as kindly and genial as man could be. He was fond of table games, in sport he was a good fisherman, and he had the blessed gift of hearty laughter. This I found in our many dinners together in company with Tyndall at the Club, followed by the theatre; the more irrational the play the better he enjoyed it, even though now and again he could not restrain testy words on a gallant comedian's flagrant psychological incoherence.

I often visited him in his house at St. John's Wood, and on one occasion I persuaded Balfour to come with me. He was always extremely cordial, and evidently fond of brief companionship. We only touched from time to time on serious things, and then he would draw off in haste, as fearing cerebral agitation. Shortly before he left St. John's Wood for Brighton, I drove up to see him one afternoon. He explained that when you grow old, gardens and trees make but depressing company; what you need are the winds, the changing light and cloud, the wild tossing of the waters, the forces of nature, in their living commotion. All this he sought as time passed in a pleasant home on the eastern shore of Brighton.

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In 1902 he published a little fragment opening with the admission common to the old, that for years past when watching the unfolding buds in the spring, or awakened at dawn by the song of the thrush, the thought arose whether ever again either of these delights would greet his eye or ear. Then he goes on: "After contemplating the inscrutable relation between brain and consciousness, and finding that we can get no evidence of the existence of the last without the activity of the first, we seem obliged to relinquish the thought that consciousness continues after physical organisation has become inactive. But it seems a strange and repugnant conclusion that with the cessation of consciousness at death, there ceases to be any knowledge of having existed. With his last breath it becomes to each the same thing as though he had never lived." This moving hint of difficulties in discarding the accepted tradition in that solemn enigma was due to the impression made upon him by certain new speculations upon Space. The mysteries of the objects presented to our senses, he says, may be explained by Creation or by Evolution, but Theist and Agnostic must agree in recognising the properties of Space as inherent, "eternal, uncreated—as anteceding either creation or evolution. It is impossible to imagine how the marvellous space-relations discovered by the Geometry of Position came into existence. The consciousness that without origin or cause infinite Space has ever existed and must ever exist, produces in me a feeling from which I shrink." [1]

Natural, pathetic, and in its implications sublime even as this was, it seemed like a weakening of Agnostic orthodoxy. It made some of the narrower or the firmer among us quake. After doing my best to find light on the geometry of position, I wrote to tell him that the gospel of the Unknow-

[1] *Facts and Fragments*, 210-218.

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able appeared to be in peril of heresy, like so many other gospels, and I proposed a visit to Brighton. Though he was not in full strength, he had, with his usual conscientious kindness, prepared some clear diagrams, the force of which he lucidly explained. I listened closely, took his points, or thought I did, and could only object something about Space after all being no more than a subjective impression. With flashing eye and astounded gesture, as if hearing the incredible, he exclaimed, "Then you have turned a Kantian, have you?" I saw that things could be carried no further, so with remorse in my heart I quitted him.

I am reminded by this of a passage in correspondence with a certain philosophic confederate, though Spencer would have fought hard against being called anybody's confederate in terms without rigorous qualification. It was in 1883 that Huxley wrote to me (the letter is printed in his *Life*):

> It is a curious thing that I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I did in 1800. I had sooner be in hell a good deal—at any rate in one of the upper circles, where the climate and company are not too trying. I wonder if you are plagued in this way.

My answer to his query I cannot recall; that it was a negative is certain, perhaps supported by a reference to Lucretius' world-famed Third Book, or Pliny's ironic reproach of *avida nunquam desinere mortalitas*; or our English—

> Men must endure
> Their going hence even as their coming hither;
> Ripeness is all.

A day or two before the last volume of Spencer's work was published, a friend who had read much philosophy warned me that the system expounded by Spencer was already dead, or on the eve of

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death. How this turned out I am not able to decide, but then in a single lifetime some half-dozen philosophers in their turn, after meteoric flight through the heavens, had fallen to the ground. Spencer at least did not expire without having made a host of notable contributions to the living and guiding thoughts of his age.

In the autumn of 1903 he wrote to me that the end could not be far off—an end to which he "looked forward with satisfaction." His remains were to be cremated, and, as I should suppose, he had forbidden any such ceremony as is performed over the ashes of those who adhere to the current creed. "At the same time," he went on—

> I do not like the thought of entire silence, and should be glad were there given a brief address by a friend. On looking round among my friends, you stand out above others as one from whom words would come most fitly; partly because of our long friendship, partly because of the kinship of sentiment existing between us, and partly because of the general likeness of ideas which distinguishes us from the world at large.

He added a postscript of curiously characteristic consideration, that he had bethought him of the danger that such an incident might prove disadvantageous to my next election for Parliament, and begging me to run no risks. I was naturally much moved by this high mark of confidence and gladly promised to comply, assuring him that my friends in Montrose Burghs, though for the most part staunch Presbyterians, would have no notion of objecting.

He passed away a few weeks later (December 1903), and, as it fell out, the news found me far off at Palermo. The day of his funeral I spent on the shore of the Golden Shell—that famous centre of strange synthetic history—pondering less upon the synthetic than upon an indefatigable intellect, an iron love of truth, a pure and scrupulous

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conscience, a spirit of loyal and beneficent intention, a noble passion for knowledge and systematic thought, as the instruments for man's elevation.

II

Leslie Stephen found his way into the Elysian fields of literature about the same time as myself. I first saw him at Trinity Hall, still wearing the clerical white neckcloth, but not otherwise marked by clerical demeanour. He drifted with success into the writing of articles, and he and I became comrades in the most important weekly journal of the time, both of us being found so useful as even to be worth a special retaining fee. Another contributor was the important man who became Lord Salisbury. He and I were alone together in the editorial anteroom every Tuesday morning, awaiting our commissions, but he, too, had a talent for silence, and we exchanged no words, either now or on any future occasion, though, as it happened, we often found something to say in public about each other's opinions and reasons in days to come. Stephen and I were shut out from political writing, for we were both of us in politics inexorable root and branch men; our editorial masters were just as strong for Church and Queen, with even a dark suspicion of partnership with Dr. Pusey, and an odd admixture besides of two or three of the most unflinching and dogmatical Erastians in the kingdom. The staff must have worn a curious physiognomy to a candid observer who knew the secrets. Leslie Stephen.

People who did not know Stephen found him unceremonious and even grim, and in truth he did not suffer gladly either a bad argument or a fool in person. With nobody was it more impossible to quarrel, and considering that he held editorial reins for most of his literary life, in highly responsible

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enterprises and with miscellaneous teams to drive from roadsters to Arabs, we may see why Meredith summed him up on this side as "equable." His natural kindness of heart, supported by his passion for reason and fair play, made him the most considerate and faithful of men. The day after his first great stroke of tribulation fell upon him, he made his way to me at Brighton, and we had a week of walking together over the wintry downs. In a long letter on his return home his desolation found words that could only have come from the tenderest of hearts. At the end he said: "Men don't often make declaration of affection, and it is best not, but I may for once use the privilege of deep sorrow and say that I value your friendship as highly as any man's, and hope that you and I may hold together as long as we are in this queer world." And so we did with all our hearts, through long years of companionship. We were both of us endowed with powers of reserve on right occasion, though once at a memorable date in history I thought he abused this gift. One Sunday afternoon he had walked over to my remote fastness on the Hog's Back far away from telegrams and news, in the beginning of September 1870. For two or three hours we discussed books, ideas, philosophic intimates. On parting, as we sauntered up the avenue, he slowly turned round as for some afterthought, and in prosaic tones dropped the quite casual observation: "I suppose you have heard that the French army has surrendered at Sedan and the Emperor is a prisoner."

His industry was prodigious and his workmanship thorough. He hardly excelled in the power ascribed to Rembrandt of making his figures original, real complex beings, and not mere parcels of ideas and outside acts. In this gift Carlyle was so pre-eminent as to be the only writer of his time to whose genius it belonged; Macaulay, great

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though he was, did not find his way to the indwelling man of many of his figures. Stephen keeps entirely clear of that studied style which has been called a "toilette performed from folly or vanity" before the glass, sometimes approaching the waxwork. There are no rockets or Roman candles. He did his best to obey the admirable, but for most of us unattainable, rule—"Suppose yourself with a company of friends in your room, and you are telling them an event in your life; affectation would fill you with horror; sublime words and sonorous antitheses dare not intrude." In his grave histories of speculation he writes plain natural prose, though it has not the incomparable lucidity of Hume or Mill, nor the telling force of Huxley. It is often open to the objection that he found in his own philosophic writing—its turn for "logic-chopping" and splitting a straw into four. It is different in his studies on the fascinating themes of pure literature; there, as in the vignettes of its great practitioners, he is as excellent as untiring diligence, sound judgment, sense of proportion, the mastery of a clear sentence, can make a critic. Two peculiarities are striking. His range does not go much beyond the writers of his own country, Greeks, Romans, Italians, Germans, even Frenchmen, appearing but little. Second, he is not of the school who seek in a book its social bearing and relations to the needs or conditions of its day. In both of these aspects he differs from Matthew Arnold, not altogether for the better. His sarcasms were light, though they could be pungent; his ironies frequent, and they were part of him. No agnostic of his strong nature, for that matter, stoically content with the limits of human knowledge as they confront and bind the thinker, could avoid irony in a world where so many thousand dreams have always passed for certitudes.

To say a word more on style. Stephen was at

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his best in writing, where he found most enjoyment as companion of mountain nature. Meredith used to say that some pages in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, and some in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, are the high-water mark of English prose in our time. There are pages in Stephen's *Playground of Europe* that I would like to join with this pair. The piece of The Alps in Winter is a masterpiece in the rare and exquisite art of reverie. Only it was not art at all; it is the natural outpouring of a tender and masculine spirit with a patient gaze in a sore hour. He hints a modest reproach that Ruskin's Matterhorn is perhaps too fine, and some of us at least prefer Stephen's pensive but accurate vision of desolate Alpine effects, saturated as it is with deep thoughts and impressive human feeling, not a word of it forced out of the vein of sincere spontaneous musing, as in every sense more moving, strengthening, and true than elaborated prose like so much of Ruskin. The fifth of Rousseau's *Rêveries* is a delicious idyll, and well deserves its fame, but Stephen's three or four Alpine pieces have a ray divine that is all their own, and they wear well, as he says of Wordsworth, because they rest on solid substance. They rest on the association of a personified sublimity in mountain nature, with the awe, reverence, hope, love, that mark the highest nature in man. To nobody was anything to be called sentimentalism less attractive than to Stephen. He defined it as indulgence in emotion for its own sake. These terrible eternal presences led him to a manful lesson all the more striking for a man walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Some felt that the iron of his short clerical period had entered his soul; he could not forgive what he called the old device of twisting faith out of moonshine. Truth to him was truth, and stood first and foremost. An article in a creed was either

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true or it was not true. A symbol meant something, or else it was illusion and dream. "We shall be content to admit openly," he wound up his *Agnostic's Apology*, "while you whisper under your breath or hide in technical jargon, that the ancient secret is a secret still; that man knows nothing of the infinite and absolute; and that knowing nothing he had better not be dogmatic about his ignorance. And meanwhile we will endeavour to be as charitable as possible, and while you trumpet forth officially your contempt for our scepticism, we will at least try to believe that you are imposed upon by your own bluster." Still more impatient was he of the "refined Epicureanism" or "vapid optimism" which he thought one of the worst and commonest tendencies of the age. "The so-called believer of this type," he said, "is a cynic in a thin disguise. He is partly aware that his belief is a sham, but he is not the less resolved to stick to a sham so pleasant. He answers his opponents by a shriek or a sneer. The sentiment that he most thoroughly hates and misunderstands is the love of truth for its own sake."

On the political side of things he began as an ardent Liberal, partly owing to the influence of Mill, and partly from his friendship for Fawcett. He was one of the most vehement and enlightened champions of the North in the American Civil War. He went all the way with the Manchester school and its ideals. Then his political temper changed —not from any particular reaction in opinions; but his interest paled, and he saw nothing useful and practical for him to do. His philosophy did not harden him, as sensible philosophy should, against the creaking and slow grinding of parliamentary machinery. In short, he dropped politics. He could not take up anything without making it an effective pursuit, and for effective and continuous

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study of politics his bondage left him little time. "You have soared into a political empyrean," he wrote to me in 1885, "while I am knee-deep in dictionary and drudgery." I could have explained to him that even political empyrean is not exactly safe against what much resembles drudgery.

Often in this long battle I thought more than usual of a saying of his own, that what people call their principles are really their pretexts for acting in the obviously convenient way. Amid the angers of the Boer War, in which I am pretty sure that he was again on what I thought the wrong side, he wrote the ripest of his books in our literary series, an estimate of George Eliot. His biographer has thought it worth while to transcribe a letter of mine to Stephen about it, and it is anything but egotism that makes me glad to read some of it over again:

> *November* 1901.—I spent yesterday by my fireside, after a political pilgrimage in Scotland, in reading your *George Eliot*. Seldom has any day's reading given me more real and unalloyed pleasure. The criticism is, to my mind, the best the world has seen for many a day, and I owe to you my first comprehension of *Middlemarch*. In this region, my dear Stephen, there is no Englishman living can touch you. It is a comfort to think of you as having undergone your full share of all the varied experiences of life, and yet remaining so kind, serene, genial, penetrating, ripe . . . *Vom Herzen* I congratulate you.

He died some three years later, patient, open-minded, unselfish, firm, unshaken to the end.

III

Henry Sidgwick.

One of the choicest characters of this time of vigorous intellectual life was Henry Sidgwick, a man justly marked for presenting, in a time of doubt, an unfaltering belief in the reality of truth. "Great in range and exactness of knowledge, great in subtlety of analysis, great in power of criticism,

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he offered the highest type of a seeker of the truth, more anxious to understand an opponent's argument than to refute him; watchful lest any element in a discussion should be unnoticed, patient, reverent, ready to the last to welcome light from any quarter" (*Bishop Westcott*). His friends will recognise in such words as these an excellent description of a remarkable man. We must add to them ready wit, fine humour, sympathy, friendliness, and an inexhaustible freedom of spirit that harmonised with the mental colour of the era. He broke with orthodox Christianity in an early stage of his life, and seems to have made no return to it, though his hospitable mind tempted him into a region of speculations in psychical research which provoked in some of his friends just as lively anathema as Mill's lapse into Manicheanism. Like the best minds of his generation, whatever their turn in philosophy, he felt the common impulse to active interest in public affairs and practical devotion to improvements both in political theory and opinion, and in the diffusion alike of knowledge and more exact modes of thought. He knew that to be the only safeguard of a decent democracy.

He fought one of the stiffest battles of the time in the movement for the better education of women. This was no doubt due to the influence of Mill, though in later years the admiration of Mill as teacher and thinker with which he had begun his intellectual course, had been in some degree withdrawn. He spread the impress of an energetic, sincere, and truth-seeking nature—that impress of character which often means so much more both to others and the man himself than any external career. It was his feel of the realities of truth that brought him perilously near the genius of scepticism; by the incessant and fine-drawn refining and testing to which he subjected commonplaces in politics, morals, and individual and

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national action alike. If any Englishman ever belonged to the household of Socrates, Sidgwick was he. Nobody was further removed from the fault of "fatuous self-confidence" which he once noted down against Comte and Spencer. As a writer his method made him difficult, and his contribution as a whole is not easy to grasp, even by people as painstaking as himself. Yet in nobody did rationalism clothe itself in more ingenious, subtle, or effective forms. There is a story that as an examiner at Cambridge he found in the candidate's paper some mysterious Hegelian passages, and he observed to a brother-examiner: "*I can see that this is nonsense, but is it the right kind of nonsense?*" Elucidation would spoil the secret of this dark interrogatory. Intelligent readers will not miss its drift as to truth and toleration and the mould of man to whose lips the query came. To comprehend that nonsense can ever be right in kind is one of the many keys to genuine richness of nature. He left a world of affectionate admirers, but he founded no school; and if he had, nobody would have been so competent as himself to reduce the pretensions of its scholars to a nullity.

IV

What is a man of letters? The French are skilled in the whole range of literary art, and I have taken for a motto on my first page a French writer's definition. Of one side of the man of letters nothing could be more admirably said. Of the *mens divinior* in him it is an excellent account, and happy the man of letters of whom it is true. Happier still if, with this subtly composed background in his mind, he can find besides a steady and well-guided hand for practical service of the human commonwealth.

In discussing the influence of habits of business

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upon literary pursuits, Mill considered that nothing promoted activity of mind more than habits of business. He found, in his earlier days at least, that he could do much more in two hours after a busy day, than when he sat down to write with time at his own command. Bagehot is a conspicuous example of the union of admirable composition with close attention to practical affairs. Gibbon, as we all know, says he never found his mind more vigorous nor his composition happier than in the winter hurry of London society and parliament. Grote, on the other hand, who worked eight hours a day at his *History of Greece*, found the demands of his bank too severe before he got two of his eight volumes out. One of the most agreeable novelists of our day was a hard-worked servant of the Post Office, and sat down as punctually to tell the stories of Barchester at five or six o'clock every morning, as if the whole of his masters at the Treasury had been on the watch.

Matthew Arnold.

The man of letters whom I should like to place in the front line of my generation in serious drift, influence, importance, and social insight was Matthew Arnold, and he was a Government Inspector of Schools with mechanical habits and fixed demands on time. He was the most pleasing and sociable of companions, so diverse and well mixed were his gifts and interests. He had the first element of a good talker, he was a good listener; there was no slowness in accommodating his mood to yours; he really cared about what he was saying, and he supposed the same care in you; you felt both seriousness and charm. He did not willingly talk about nothing at all, which might seem a peculiarly modest merit, if it were not so uncommon. In a moment of unthinking dream, I once earnestly assured him that if I could have chosen my lot, I would have chosen Wordsworth's life among the lakes and fells. "No, no,"

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he said, "you would not; it was a peasant's life; you would soon have longed for us two to be dining together at the Athenaeum." I daresay he was right, and like Lawrence, "of virtuous father virtuous son," I should not have been sorry to accept his invitation to some "neat repast to feast us, light and choice, of Attic taste, with wine." When I mentioned the point to Mr Gladstone once, he assured me that he often saw Wordsworth, and found him a polite and amiable man, and Mill, who visited Rydal in 1834, has drawn a singularly attractive sketch of the poet, praising him particularly for freedom from one-sidedness, which is perhaps a peasant's trait.

Nowhere was Arnold so delighted and delightful as in his Surrey cottage, joyous in the play of warm home affection; in watching the cedars, flowers, blossoms, lawns of his skilfully tended garden; in the faithful salutation of favourite bird or dog—fidelity repaid by an immortality in verse that moves the lover of the dog like the lines where the Father of Poetry makes the old hound Argos prick up his ears at the voice of his long-absent master, and then close his eyes in dark death. A word of recognition for his work from people whose words were worth having gave him unaffected pleasure. I informed him once how Renan had told me that George Sand had said to him when she saw Arnold a good many years before, "Il faisait l'effet d'un Milton en voyageant." It is no wonder that even such fugitive memory as this pleased him, from a genius to whom he always gave the superlative praise that she was the greatest spirit in our European world from the time when Goethe died.

As critic in an epoch that stood in peculiar need of criticism in its largest sense, Arnold must be called incomparable among Englishmen of his day. In the region of bookish taste, and in vision for the right tests, alike in prose and verse, he was

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admirable, if not always absolutely sure. In application of such tests from rich historic stores, along with insight for the temper and needs of his time, he was sane, measured, just, competent. He was, too, extraordinarily ingenious in finding the summary keyword. It is true to say of him, and if it be true, it is enormously important, that in every branch of his work his aim was social, or, if you like it better, patriotic. Birrell has well said that Liberalism is not a creed but a frame of mind, and Arnold's claim to be considered a Liberal was justified. In every page of his literature you have the rare feel for life, and sincere living care and interest in the world around us. Swinburne was right in crediting him with at least one most loyal and liberal service to his countrymen: "He has striven to purge them of the pestilence of provincial thought and traditions, of blind theory and brute opinion, of all that hereditary policy of prejudice which substitutes self-esteem for self-culture, self-worship for self-knowledge; which clogs and encrusts all powers and all motions of the mind with a hard husk of mechanical conceit. And here, heaven knows, in his dull dumb way the Briton stands ahead of all men. In the stone walls and iron girders of this faith our champion has done what a man may to make a breach." While some chose frontal attack, Arnold adopted criticism in flank columns, but on every side—manners, literature, education, theological faith, church polity, Ireland. He says in a private letter to somebody that I owed him more than I thought. This was not so, for I owed him much, and from Oxford days and onwards I well knew it. Arnold and we others of a very different school, not without something of unholy passion for naked pugilism, had common enemies to encounter. Reason, criticism, information, foreign as well as home, made a common weapon against thick-sighted prejudices

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and moveless conventions, bad for the individual, bad for the community. Arnold was usually, though not always, more at home in a velvet glove.

If anybody seeks a definite measure of the signal advance that has been made in Liberalism on its imperialist side, he will find what it is good for him to want in Arnold's short book inviting the study of Celtic literature. It is prefaced by a passage from the leading newspaper of the period, directed in the best Corinthian or bruiser fashion against the Welsh fondness for their old language and legends as no better than mischievous and selfish sentimentalism. Arnold's own doctrine that the spread of English in Wales is quite compatible with honouring and preserving the Welsh language and literature was rudely set down as arrant nonsense, and he is mocked for his coxcombry in requiring something flimsier than the strong sense and sturdy morality of his fellow-Englishmen. Yes, Arnold replied, but my fellow-Englishmen must add something to their strong sense and sturdy morality; new ideas and forces are gaining power in England, and almost every one of them is the friend of the Celt and not his enemy. When shall we learn, he asks in a sentence well worth inscribing in letters of gold in four at least of the great offices of State in Whitehall, "that what attaches people to us is the spirit we are of, and not the machinery we employ"? "Behold!" he exclaimed, as he threw down the bruiser's article, "*England's difficulty in governing Ireland!*" In truth, his insight into the roots of the Irish case, and the strong persistence with which he pressed that case upon unwilling ears, were in some ways the most remarkable instance of his many-sided and penetrating vision.

It fell to me to say a word or two in the House of Commons (1888) on this bright ornament, and much more than ornament, of our day, and the

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recognition of his loss was well taken by members on both sides. But not many really knew the service of a man who had put his finger on one of our most urgent needs. "Our middle classes are the worst educated in the world. The education of the mass of the middle classes is vulgar and unsound, our body of secondary schools is the most imperfect and unserviceable in civilised Europe." These pregnant words were backed by serious and long work in mastering continental systems of national instruction on the spot, and no voice of his time was more fervent in trying to awaken his countrymen to their shortcomings in that vital sphere. Persistently, again, but with far less effort, he strove to reconstruct the foundations of theology. He believed this to be the essential function of literature in our generation, and literary criticism to be more effective for the purpose than either natural science or philosophic history. He startled the world by new definitions of mysterious things. Religion is "morality touched with emotion. The universal order is a stream of tendency by which all things strive to fulfil the law of their Being. The supreme Ruler is a Power not ourselves, making for righteousness." And so forth. More than once his literary tact did not save him from slips; the velvet glove in at least one case wore cruelly thin, and devout people were more shocked by his artifices of polite letters than they were by the more plain-spoken negation.

He somewhere sketched the main religious stages of the modern world. Dante set forth the lesson of the world as it was figured in Catholicism through the Middle Ages. Then Shakespeare came, leaving undisturbed the traditions of Christendom reformed and unreformed as the spiritual basis, but exposing the significance of human life in all its fulness, variety, and power as it was brought to light in the fertile and exciting new knowledge of the

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Renaissance. When Goethe next appeared, the old spiritual basis had been lost to Europe, and the inevitable task for him as for the modern poets who accompanied or followed him was to interpret human life afresh, and to supply a new spiritual foundation. Byron's daring force and Goethe's sage mind brought passing reliefs to an "iron time of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears," but it was left to Wordsworth to show once more the freshness of the early world.

When all is said for and against the worth of his contribution to theology, the debt of Liberalism to Arnold as a general critic of our needs will long deserve grave commemoration. But even people who were not much amused by levity, or by personifications that needed the concrete genius of Dickens to make them as typical as he intended, still recognised the real value of his talk of sweetness, light, philistine, barbarian, culture, sweet reasonableness, and were in their hearts grateful to him. Disraeli told him, on the strength of these current phrases, that he was the only living Englishman who had become a classic in his lifetime.

Such was Arnold's loose outline of past and present. The critic was not all, was not the highest nor the most enduring part of him. The reading world will long and more and more be grateful to him as the writer of true and beautiful poetry. English literature has three elegiac poems of the first order, *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, and *Thyrsis*, and Swinburne, no mean critic, gives to the last of these the second place. At least it is a very fine third. In narrative poetry *Sohrab and Rustum* belongs to the very first order, in pathos, colour, solemnity of march, tenderness, the image of the breeding eagle, the strange pity and awe of the closing gloom. *Tristram* and *The Forsaken Merman* do not fall behind in their power and beauty. Arnold was delighted to tell us of a message sent

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to him from Tennyson, bidding him write no more of such prose things as *Literature and Dogma*, but to give us something like *Thyrsis*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, *The Forsaken Merman*. In the same spirit George Eliot told a friend that of all modern poetry Arnold's was that which kept constantly growing upon her. One of the slender volumes of his verse has made a cherished companion of mine on many a journey. The book of selections takes little compass, and in it anybody who is for a short interval a traveller away from the hurry of the world's rough business, may well find beauty to refresh, wisdom to quiet, associations to remind and to collect. As it happens, I find written on the fly-leaf of this small treasure some words I had inscribed at what was to prove a memorable date: *Read with much fortifying quietude of mind on the glorious forenoon of our departure, on the matchless terrace at Beatenberg, June* 12, 1914. In a few weeks, hardly more than a few days, the blunders and precipitancy of folly-smitten rulers let loose a fierce hurricane of destruction and hate that swept quietude out of the world for a long span of time to come.

V

Of strangely different poetic calibre was Browning's muse. On one great illustration of the difference I would say a short word, though it took an unusually long word in the pages of our *Review*. A sense of the struggle that truth has to make against slackness of mind, difficulty of vision, and the strange devious ways of the world, moved some of us with strong feeling for a new poem of Browning's in four volumes, a parable of that struggle in a tragic legend. Say what we will of *The Ring and the Book*, its dubious aesthetic, its strain on language and even grammar, the absence from a good half of its pages of music, its impossible

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length, yet its intellectual moral is lighted up with an intensity of dramatic force that is hardly to be surpassed in literature. *Half Rome, the Other Half Rome, the Tertium Quid*, show us how ill truth sifts itself, to how many it never comes at all, how blurred, confused, next door to false it is figured even to those who seize the hem of the garment. Apart from the mixed power and tenderness, the diabolic personalities and the angelic, this is what made the supreme value of the book, and pointed with profound imaginative power and subtlety a moral of which men can never hear too much. My extraction of this prose from poetry of such extraordinary strength was indeed the exchange of gold for copper, but it caught the attention, not always the approval, of other critics, and it gave some pleasure to Browning himself.

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CHAPTER VIII

A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

You seem to me to be in danger of dividing yourself from the fact of this present Universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like into perilous altitudes, as I know. . . . Surely I could wish to see you return into your one poor nineteenth century, its follies and maladies, its blind or half-blind but gigantic toilings, its laughter and its tears, and trying to evolve in some measure the hidden Godlike that lies in *it*—that seems to me the kind of feat for literary men.—*Carlyle to Emerson.*

To trace the career and character of a man of signal public virtue, of humane and tolerant temper, unceasing activity in national service, of ardent faith in peace and freedom, must be counted good fortune for a political writer. Such good fortune fell to me when I undertook a life of Cobden. I had, it is true, the double disadvantage of never having known or even seen him, and of being then without personal experience of the ways and spirit of the House of Commons. But I enjoyed the zealous co-operation of Sir Louis Mallet, who pressed this important duty on me. He was one of the most competent economists of the time, Cobden's close friend and disciple, with a firm grasp of his whole doctrine in its widest bearings. In our present overwhelming days such hope as is left to Europe and America seems to yearn for some formal confederacy of States that shall keep the world's peace. There are many reasons for suspecting illusion. The dream is old, and historic awakening has been rude. It was in spirit, at any

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rate, the idea of Cobden's teaching. To repeat old words, it was not free trade between any two countries that was his aim, but to remove obstacles in the way of the stream of freely exchanging commodities that ought, like the Oceanus of primitive geography, to encircle the habitable world. This ideal made him essentially the international man, and it was for this, above every other aspect, that Mallet, with all the experience of public offices, found the surest ground for admiring and revering him. Mallet was a man of many remarkable and attractive qualities, mingling something of the spirit of his ancestral Geneva with the good business of Whitehall. To me his fervid intelligence was an irresistible stimulus in a congenial task.

Cobden died in 1865, and my book appeared in 1881. Disraeli intended what was on his lips the highest of all compliments when he assured doubting hearers that Cobden was "a statesman." Such tribute was a generous contrast to the obloquy with which organs of his party assailed the Manchester bagman, and loudly blamed Ministers for not suppressing the Corn Law League, "the foulest, the most selfish, the most dangerous combination of recent times." Then and since men denounced political economy, though they took care to have a political economy of their own, just as in a more spiritual field those who denounce the incurable infirmities of human reason are always extremely anxious to show that human reason is on their side. Cobden had discovered no new economic or fiscal truths, nor was he the first to press free trade into working politics. Shelburne, the political instructor of Pitt, and himself the disciple of French teachers and of Adam Smith, was Cobden's precursor in his main principles. The philosophical radicals had worked out the free trade principles which had come into practical view in the age of Lord Liverpool, but the radicals were a school, and

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what the times now demanded was not a school, but organised and active combatants. People have criticised the saying that his secret in the new career of agitation lay in his use of Persuasion; for it seems that, according to the dictionary, persuasion is applicable to the passions, and argument to the reason. Cobden's appeal was invariably to reason and never to passion; he did not persuade, his aim was to convince, that better way of giving to opinion an enduring base. This is no point to quarrel about. Peel's memorable words are enough, when he said that Cobden's eloquence was the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned. Even so fastidious a judge as Matthew Arnold, though deeply pained that Cobden should have thought Oxford would be all the better if more of the time given to the Greek stream of the Ilissus had been given to Chicago, and that he found more things worth knowing in a single number of the *Times* than in all the works of Thucydides, still called him a man of exquisite intelligence and charming character. When it is said that Cobden's was the radicalism of a class, two things are overlooked: his early battles were necessarily contests against the class in whose interests the Corn Laws happened to be obstinately upheld, and that aspect of Cobden's activity could not be helped. The second thing is the fact that his radicalism was the least vital and important part of him. When he is condemned as having no coherent system, this is exactly what he had, just as Disraeli had a coherent system in Imperialism. He may, or may not, have misjudged the political position, but if he did misjudge it that was because he was too systematic for popular apprehension. His deep insight into large actual and prospective circumstances and relations of the country—this was what made the writer of Cobden's two pamphlets the most original British statesman

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of that day, as Cavour, among other famous contemporaries, eagerly perceived. Early in life three broad propositions forced themselves upon his mind, and he kept them to the front all through. The curse of our policy, he argued, has been our love of intervention in foreign politics; our direct home difficulty is Ireland; the United States are the mighty economic rival that will rule the destinies of England. This was the threefold presentation of his case, and the advance of Russia westwards was not left out of account. Protection on corn was only one of the two giants against whom Cobden drew his sharp blade. Passion for intervention in every European difficulty was the other. Whether it was a legacy of excitability about foreign affairs after the long war with Napoleon, or a native instinct in the British bosom—however we explain it—insane people in 1834, two years after the Reform Bill, cried out in grave rebuke, "What was the government about, with no more to show for itself than bills about parliamentary reform or the poor law, while Don Carlos was fighting in Spain; Don Miguel was threatening a new conflict in Portugal; Prussian troops occupied Frankfort against the Treaty of Vienna; Algiers turned into a French colony in spite of the solemn promises of 1829; ten thousand proscribed Polish nobles wandering all over Europe; Turkey and Egypt at daggers drawn. Had we no British armies to put all these monstrous wrongs right?" We may laugh at the Don Quixote or Sancho Panza view of a national policy, but very little sufficed for a great part of Cobden's life to make its spirit the rival, and by no means a wholly unsuccessful rival either, of the policy with which he strenuously resisted it. The base of your State, he urged in season and out of season, is economic; all depends upon the soundness of national wealth: it is possible to be an economist without being a states-

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man, but you cannot be a statesman without being an economist. We may deride the Bagman's millennium as we will: as Bastiat put it, our doctrine of national wealth does not mean only more sovereigns in your exchequer; it means more bread to the hungry, more clothes for people trembling with cold, it means education, independence, manhood, and self-respect. What in heaven's name are Don Carlos and Don Miguel and ten thousand exiled Polish nobles to us?

In the efficacy of extensively reformed franchise Cobden was not so fervid a believer as Bright, his illustrious coadjutor in the battle for free trade, though he naturally fell into line when the hour struck for parliamentary reform. Political machinery was to him secondary in interest to economic products and their distribution. In early days he was even captivated with the absolutism that governed Prussia at the date when Queen Victoria ascended the British throne. He contrasted Prussian thrift and practical efficiency, and the modest comfort of its people, with the extravagance of an aristocratic government in England, from which the mass of the people were practically excluded both in legislative and executive branches for so many years after the reform of 1832. This was, however, only the fugitive impression of a traveller; and we may well remember by way of extenuation that other great men of the time were tempted in the same direction. These were the days when Carlyle was devoting fourteen years to his ten volumes of panegyric on Frederick the Great, and Comte was giving the Prussian king's name to the month of Modern Statesmanship in his famous Calendar. Turgot, the noblest of French reformers, assumed a centralised authority as the source and engine of improvement.

In the days when with indomitable industry and tact Cobden was pushing forward the French

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Commercial Treaty, he fell into some disgrace with two different sets of people. First came the narrow economists who espied in a treaty the damning heresy of reciprocity. Next there were uncompromising politicians who could not bear to think of him in confidential relations with the Man of Sin, who had shed much blood and broken a parliament to plant himself on a despotic throne. No doubt the common condonation of Napoleon's start in empire, followed as that was by all the arts of corruption, political enervation, and military repression, was shallow enough. He was at any rate accepted as their ruler by the French majority, and this seemed whitewash thick enough to justify a valuable political bargain with him. A touch of mephistophelian consolation was found for over-fastidious critics of the treaty in the fact that it kindled the active wrath of manufacturing interests in France, and so helped by and by to oust the imperial adventurer from his palaces.

Democracy had not grown to be a favourite word of English politics in that epoch, though the Manchester men insisted vehemently on the mischief of monopolist aristocracies. The frenzy about the papal aggression (1850) might have warned them that the removal of national prejudice and ancient prepossession takes time. To their surprise and vexation they soon discovered that in the arena of foreign policy the aristocracy had Demos on their side, and that the two together were their masters. The famous case where, to establish the claims of a Gibraltar Jew whose house had been sacked in Athens by a Christian mob (1850), Palmerston resorted to force against Greece and made a quarrel with France, whose good offices he had accepted and then rejected, was a curious sign that *civis Romanus* was still to be the key to British hearts for the coming epoch. The perverse blunders of a British diplomatist, the distractions

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of a coalition cabinet, the confused designs of Napoleon III., brought England into the Crimean War. Of no war was the folly exposed with more force of argument, better-informed judgment of facts, more splendid eloquence, more undaunted civil courage. Yet it all went for less than nothing. The fury against the Czar outdid the fury against the Pope. The heroes of the long campaign for free trade could not appear on a public platform. At my ancestral fireside I remember heartfelt wishes that Cobden and Bright could be flung together into the unsanitary waters of the Irwell. As all know, it was left to a powerful Conservative statesman some years later to express his fear that the whole Crimean enterprise had been putting money on the wrong horse.

As for the once famous, but now long forgotten, affair of the *Arrow* and the quarrel with China (1857), Cobden's repulse was even more vexatious, and to onlookers still more instructive. Here, too, standard sophisms were complacently trotted forth, with the advantage that China was only a weak Power. The officer on the spot, it was held, had no doubt gone flagrantly wrong, but it would never do either to recall him, or to redress the injustice to which he had committed us, for orientals, as all the world knows, mistake attempts to do justice for fear; if legality did not exactly warrant violence at Canton, at any rate policy demanded it. Such was the defence of proceedings which a man of cool temper and good experience like Lord Elgin pronounced a scandal, and a majority of the House of Commons thought so too. But Palmerston appealed to the electors. The Parliament that the Manchester men had entered as victors in the stoutest struggle of their time was dissolved, and sweeping disaster overtook them all. Bright was not thrown into the Irwell, but he was turned out of Manchester at the bottom of the poll. Cobden and the rest of the band

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shared his mortifying fate. When the Duke of Wellington had his windows broken less than twenty years after Waterloo, he may well have been angry, but his principles were not absolutely shattered, the King's government could still be carried on. Cobden, on the other hand, had fought his battle in reliance on a rational public opinion, and that proved a broken reed. It was the whole line of his fortification that fell to wreck.

After one of Cobden's peace speeches Disraeli in a fugitive sally laughed at him as a dreamer of the school of Rousseau. No two human beings were ever more unlike than these two, and we may smile at any association between free trade, non-intervention, commercial treaties on the one side, and the Social Contract, Émile, the Savoyard Vicar on the other. But the pervading spirit of a prominent man may be something to note, apart from his special performances, and the spirit of peace, social simplification, brotherhood, human kinship, that diffuses itself through Rousseau was in its own way, and with its own dialect, the underlying sentiment that gave energy and soul to our Manchester manufacturers. Disraeli, who knew so much of literature, was not quite wide of a reasonable mark.

Some reproached me with not insisting more upon Cobden's limitations. If Rousseau by one of the strange caprices of the stars had been a member of Parliament, he would certainly have voted for bills regulating the hours of labour in factories; Cobden on the other hand disliked them. He had early proclaimed himself for free education, and against the employment of young children in the cotton-mills. So far he was before his time; there he stopped. This mishap in his career was all the more singular, because while insisting that labour was strong enough to extort beneficent restrictions by its own independent

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action, he declared with peculiar emphasis that he would rather live under a Dey of Algiers than under the independent action of a Trades Committee. As if unorganised demands in hours and wages were not just as useless as demands for free food would have been without the organisation of his own League. The Trades Union Acts of 1872 and 1875 averted a revolution, but nobody denies that the Factory Acts of 1844 and 1847 were open to Cobden's objection, whatever it may have been worth, that their tendencies were socialistic. The industrialism that Cobden's economic policy directly reared into such colossal dimensions was sure to lead to new currents of thought on property, wealth, and the rights of man. Cobden, like other great statesmen, worked for his generation. Not for one generation, but for the best part of two, his political thought supplied both parties, more or less sincerely, with working principles and fighting watchwords, and was accepted as the system by which the strength of the nation could be best secured. In words, of which it has been said that they are just as true of Bismarck's conversion from free trade to State Socialism in 1883, I ventured to sum up our Englishman's plan: "Great economic and social forces flow with tidal sweep over communities only half conscious of that which is befalling them. Wise statesmen are those who foresee what time is thus bringing, and try to shape institutions and to mould men's thought and purpose in accordance with the change that is silently surrounding them." If it comes, the substitution of the State in the administration of capital for the Manchester gospel of individual self-help, will mark an epoch as does the Reformation or the French Revolution—each of them associated with long, vehement, confused struggle, neither of them ending in unclouded blessings. Meanwhile, the statesmen are forgotten, their mistakes and their successes. Quickly over

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both gathers the moss of time. In Cobden's case, name and personality survive. Bagehot said there had been nothing like him in English history before, and perhaps there will not be anything like him after. His character was "of the simple, emphatic, picturesque sort, which most easily, when opportunities are given, as they were to him, goes down to posterity." To have had anything to do with the literary presentation of a character so admirable and attaching and of work so important, may well indeed be reckoned good fortune.

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BOOK II

PUBLIC LIFE

Every generation needs to be addressed in its own language.

BOSANQUET.

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CHAPTER I

A NEW FRIEND

When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee ; for instance the activity of one, and the industry of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth.—MARCUS AURELIUS.

Verae amicitiae difficillime reperiuntur in eis qui in honoribus reque publica versantur.—CICERO.

IT was in 1873 that I made the acquaintance of one who soon became one of the most conspicuous figures in the public life of his time. Chamberlain did not originate new political ideas, nor launch political projects that nobody had ever heard of before. But then everybody knows how constantly history has shown that a personality may be a force as powerful in the world as projects and ideas. This proved to be a case. His gift of speech was original, and it impressed his character upon the country—a character of vivid and resolute energy, fearless tenacity of will, vehement confidence both in the merits and the triumph of any cause with which he was induced to concern himself. Well might it be that such a man, believing every word he said, was destined for a generation to come to play a memorable part in the fortunes of both of our great party confederacies, first one and then the other. His singular aptitudes for public affairs had already dazzled that vehement spirit whom Meredith depicted in one of the most effective of his romances. Maxse, who was fired by all the political sailor's passion for Thorough, had made

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up his mind that Chamberlain and I were meant for one another. He introduced us at a small meeting called to protest against a section of Forster's Education Act. The exact iniquities of the Twenty-fifth Clause of that famous measure have vanished from the mindful tablets of most people's brains. They were held up to just anathema at meetings of the Radical wing of the Liberal party. More moderate politicians, I believe, thought it a narrow ditch for mortal grapple between two great hosts of men armed to the teeth. Yet sound principles were at stake, and Chamberlain and I fell into an understanding which, unlike as were our antecedents, soon developed into sworn alliance and much more.

No man wasted less time than Chamberlain in regrets over either mishaps or mistakes in the race. Yet he was sorry that he had missed chances for wider beginnings in the humaner letters. When in later days he paid his first visit with me to Jowett at Oxford, and I had taken him round the garden walks, antique gates, and "massy piles of old munificence," he said to me in fervid accent, "Ah, how I wish that I could have had a training in this place." Yet he came to be more widely read in books worth reading than most men in public life, and there was no limit to his interest in art, modern history, imaginative letters, with all that they import in politics. As it was, he drew round him at Birmingham a remarkable circle, and in after-dinner conversations with them in his library there was an activity of mind, a discussion of theoretic social views in terms of practical life, an atmosphere of strenuous and disinterested public spirit, all far superior for effective purpose to the over-critical air and tone of the academic common-room. One of the company was an ardent expounder of Ruskin. Another was a clear-headed Baptist divine, and a third a broad-minded Uni-

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tarian divine, though for that matter no disputes on dogma were allowed as *hors-d'œuvre* to spice their feasts. The traditional feud between Churchman and Unitarian was still alive and deep in the town that had been the home of Priestley; it went so far as to check even intermarriage and commensality, so the Church of England was unrepresented. A fourth was George Dawson, the friend of Mazzini, Carlyle, Emerson, who had done as much as any Englishman of his time by the picturesque force of his lectures, both in Birmingham and other large towns all over England, to awaken curiosity and popularise interest in the great names of literature and history. Then an able editor, in no satiric sense, knew how to temper zeal and warmth with wholesome judgment, and kept them awake to quiet currents of popular opinion, which without him might have been overlooked. I should be wrong to forget Mr. Jesse Collings. That unselfish and whole-hearted man brought the needs of the toiler in the fields into the forefront, with all the force of living experience, and with an appeal to practical justice, common sense, direct human sympathy, that made the land question from his lips something extremely different from the same matter in the hands of the conveyancer, the family solicitor, the writer on tenures, or the *a priori* radical with land reform as the one flag on his bare poles. Before them all in strength of calibre was R. W. Dale, the embodiment in its full strength of the spirit of free churches after the New Model, a true Cromwellian in vigour of political imagination and virile sense of the trumpet-call of public duty. Dale's voice, his look, his gesture, his outspoken courage, were all Cromwellian. The procession of the ages had added in him the grace of tolerance, so fatally absent from his Protestant forebears of the seventeenth century. A passionate enemy of establishment, he yet did full justice to the Church

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of England as a spiritual body, and was not afraid even to proclaim in unsurpassed force of language how little he was insensible to the historic "majesty and grandeur of the Church of Rome." There is true point in Birrell's saying that it has always been very hard in England to be a Nonconformist. It demanded an effort, and was felt to be cutting yourself off, not from the fountains of holiness, but from the main currents of secular national life. One peculiarity of this sort of isolation was that it had never prevented either them or evangelical churchmen from joining hands with free-thinkers in the attack upon slavery or the advocacy of education. James Mill and Francis Place were regarded as atheists, and were yet adopted as close philanthropic allies by Zachary Macaulay and by the Quaker, William Allen. Other negations made my welcome none the less cordial.

True, all this makes no finished literary picture like Falkland's famous *Convivium philosophicum et theologicum*, a university in a less volume. That notwithstanding, it was a manly training-ground in living social interests, public duties, civil exercises of the time. The object was not brilliant contention, but fruitful co-operation in thought and knowledge for plain common ends. The political credo was straightforward—better popular education in popular hands, the elevation of municipal life, its duty and its dignity, the energetic extension of its activities, plans for making electoral power more responsive to efficacious public opinion, religious equality above all. Seriously as they applied themselves to their topics, gaiety was abundant. As was said of Friedrich Wilhelm's *Tabagie Collegium*, tobacco taken in company allows a man to be silent without embarrassment, though, on the other hand, taken in solitude tobacco is suspected of turning thought into reverie. Nobody could be more readily and cheerfully silent than

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the host, nobody a more narrowly attentive listener. He had a certain testing, half-ironic, yet never supercilious glance, that kept men to their point. Swift in debate, he was not in the least affected with the barren spirit of contradiction. I know no better account of his way of conversation, now and always, than was afterwards given by an illustrious man of unequalled experience in discussion. Mr. Gladstone wrote of him to a colleague (Oct. 8, 1885): "Chamberlain has been here. He is a good man to talk to; not only from his force and clearness, but because he speaks with reflection, does not misapprehend, or (I think) suspect, or make unnecessary difficulties, or endeavour to maintain pedantically the uniformity and consistency of his argument." No description could be more exact. In other words, nobody was ever so little of an ergoteur, the man with the wearisome passion for importunate argufying, the hound's zest for worrying its bone to the last splinter. I find no better words for him than the description of a certain Pope as "*verus, integer, apertus, nil habuit ficti, nil simulati,*" though, like the same Pope, he found plenty of detractors for whom he cared little. Many men of mark in action have gone to school to books, and taken care, in the midst of minor business, to live in hours of leisure with the immortals of a library, for refreshment, edification, stimulus. That is true. But after all, the influence of his time, whether it finds a willing or unwilling, an assenting or reluctant subject, is the educating as well as the stimulating force, and Chamberlain's school was affairs and the demands of circumstance and event. In short, though not of the politicians who are forced into action by an idea, he was quick to associate ideas with his actions.

Now, as when later he came into wide popularity and power, he had none of the childish and overdone

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discretion in which politicians of a certain order are apt to flatter their self-importance. He could be as secret as anybody when he pleased, or when secrecy was a binding duty towards other people. But he was an open man, a spontaneous man. I have always thought him, of all the men of action that I have known, the frankest and most direct, as he was, with two exceptions, the boldest and the most intrepid. This instinct was one secret of his power as a popular leader. When he encountered a current of doubt, dislike, suspicion, prejudice, in some place or some section of his party, his rule and first impulse was to hasten to put his case, to explain, to have it out. This gave him a character that was, as might have been expected, a genuine source of strength, apart from keenness of dialectic. He was not easy to disconcert, either by adverse argument or untoward news; he listened, and in an instant his mind turned in search of the best way out. Right or wrong in his conclusions, in thought or reasoning, or decision or act, nobody was keener in clearing a question of its lumber. Firm in character, he was as yet a moderate in the cast of his intelligence. Conciliatory by temperament, as the really good man of business is conciliatory, he was Thorough in his methods. People who are careless about using right words called him cynical, when they meant no more than caustic, just as they clumsily call a touch of irony a sneer. He was impatient of those clever men, more numerous than we suppose, who have an unlucky aptitude for taking hold of things by the wrong end. Still more impatient was he of any clever but irresolute man, whom he could describe in Scripture language as untempered mortar, or a cake that had not been turned. The friend and colleague of John Bright, he was bound to revere the worth of political independence, but the impotence of the impracticable type of perverted

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public spirit moved both anger and contempt. Of this type he thought Roebuck—with whom he unsuccessfully contested Sheffield in 1874—the awful example. Of equanimity he had not more than his share, but then this virtue is not always a mark of strength; perhaps less often so than not, in spite of Aristotle. He was a master of self-control if occasion demanded. When he was busy on temperance and the Gothenburg system, we had one of our talks with Carlyle. The sage told him he rejoiced that this mighty reform was being attempted; then all at once he took fire at thought of compensation for the dispossessed publican, and burst into full blaze at its iniquity. Fiercely smiting the arms of his chair, with strong voice and flashing eye, he summoned an imaginary publican before him. "Compensation!" he cried, "you dare come to me for compensation! I'll tell you where to go for compensation! Go to your father the devil, let him compensate you"—and so on in one of his highest flights of diatribe. Chamberlain, still as a stock, listened with deferential silence for long minutes, until he was able in patient tone to put the case of the respectable butler whom a grateful master had set up in a licensed and well-conducted tavern: was Mr. Carlyle sure that to turn him out, bag and baggage, was quite fair play? And so on through the arguments. The old Ram Dass with the fire in his belly listened attentively, and then admitted genially that he might have been all wrong. If Carlyle had been an angry public meeting, Chamberlain's method would have been the same. I once saw him handle a gathering of exasperated shipowners in my constituency at Newcastle with equal success.

Of the small personal jealousy that is the torment of men who lack confidence in their own qualities, it is little to say that Chamberlain had none. From that root of evil nobody in the world stood clearer.

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His fidelity to a political ally was incomparable, but for a man who was more to him than a political ally his solicitude was always alive and anxious, and I have known more than one instance where it was even singularly chivalrous. He was intent upon his public ends, and confident that they must in the long run succeed. In the moves and manœuvres that are inseparable from the machinery of party he speedily became a peculiarly sharp-sighted expert, for they were indispensable in carrying policies forward. Of him we may say, as was said of Thiers, he was fit for all the parts in the great drama. In general ideas, as I have just said, his equipment was not at this stage particularly wide. But he knew enough to be sharply interested in any general ideas that were from time to time presented to him, and he liked and valued any contribution from my own modest stock of that commodity. There never was a less negligent listener; you could never say a serious thing without attracting his attention, even though its dismissal might be rapid. His mind was open to ideas, to new subjects, new interests and purposes, but sceptical about generalised systems for unravelling the tangles of the social world. Enough for a statesman, he thought, to bring intelligent and energetic perception to events and forces as they arose. He knew that logic has its place, and in its place is a sort of moral duty, but in practical politics he rightly counted mere logic ruin. As his son well said, "He never rested. To his last day he seemed too young to leave things as they are." He was ever a man with whom tierce and quart of mind with mind filled the day. Nobody ever better fitted Halifax's description: "A difficulty raiseth the spirits of a great Man; he hath a mind to wrestle with it, and give it a Fall. A Man's Mind must be very low, if the difficulty doth not make a part of his Pleasure."

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Only let us be careful to note that Chamberlain was the last of men to engage in battle for battle's sake. Fight was no barren pleasure. Nor was it ever the ingenious lawyer's contestant advocacy. He took up a cause not from a brief, but from the inspiration of a sincere and animating interest.

His politics came to him, now and always, from a penetrating observation of things around him as they actually were. At this time the common principles of the radical school, a generation after the first Reform Bill, were enough for him, and in an ordinary way he worked informally on utilitarian and rationalist principles. As a Nonconformist of active type he hated the idea of a privileged church, exalting her mitred front in court and parliament, both wasting public money and hindering education by its claims upon the schools. He was strong from direct observation for extension of the functions and authority of local government. Free education was politic and just for the workers, and therefore expedient for the nation as a whole. Allotments and small holdings were a needed device for keeping labourers on the land, and giving them an interest in the soil they tilled. He insisted that democracy to be strong must be concentrated; its force would be wasted unless units organised themselves for electoral purposes in free, open, representative, local associations with freely chosen and recognised leaders. Vested interests, special crotchets, personal claims of all sorts, the family lawyer of the great house, naturally combined; they were like disciplined regiments against random mobs. Nothing provoked livelier antagonism than this strenuous advocacy of the Caucus.

Our friendship ripened steadily. In 1875 he wrote to me that he sometimes thought he must be like the lunatic who believed all the world mad, for after seven years of active public life he only knew four or five sane politicians. His definition of this

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enviable type was men free from every prejudice that would blind them to a policy, and prevent their ready reception and assimilation of it because it was new; above all he meant men with a just sense of the proportion of things. Most men seemed to make shipwreck on one or other of these rocks. Next year a heavy stroke of domestic tribulation fell upon him, and it naturally gave me true pleasure when he wrote, "I value your friendship very much, and it is the one bright spot in my new life that I should see more of you" (July 11, 1876).

At his first dinner with me in London I made him acquainted with three men of note, Fawcett, Courtney, and Harrison, whose points of view were very different from his tobacco parliament. The three, however, as I well knew, differed quite as much from one another as they did from Birmingham. That the first reciprocal impression was hopeful, I was not sure. His exposition of the virtue of the caucus was not convincing, even though he assured them in an ironic sentence that "the caucus tolerated everything—why, we even tolerate opposition." Evidently my friends would have a long piece of road to travel before they could all come abreast as leaders of a Liberal team.

From time to time I ventured on a note of philosophic admonition. "The only syllable in your speech," I once wrote him, "is the expression of natural rights. It has a good sound, and has been a powerful reforming weapon before now. But I don't think it is a true way of putting things, and certainly not the most useful and fertile way on British platforms at this time of day. No right is worth a straw apart from the good that it brings, and claims to right must depend not upon nature, but upon the good that the said rights are calculated to bring to the greatest number." And so forth, with the like Burkian and Benthamite rudiments.

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Crude enough, but not too crude for the purpose. I had been able to declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I had never said a word about Natural Rights in any piece of practical public business in all my life; and Chamberlain's reference to them dismayed me as if I had seen a deinotherium shambling down Parliament Street to a seat in the House of Commons.

At a later date (June 17, 1883) I sounded a warning note on a suspicious tendency that seemed discernible:

Your doctrine about keeping the priests, etc., under the grip of the State is bad, in my sober and daylight judgment. It is the Whig and Erastian plea for Establishment: viz. that it enables sensible politicians to keep fanatics in order. Leave the spiritual power alone, I say. You will only get into a hopeless mess, as Bismarck has done. I'm all against your "autoritaire." I don't believe in it, and I never did. Your Cromwells and Fredericks didn't do their work half as well as slow, sober, free American citizens. I've just come across a letter from Carlyle to Emerson in his old age (1871) about America:

"In my occasional explosions against Anarchy, and my inextinguishable hatred of it, I privately whisper to myself—'Could any Frederick or most perfect Governor you could hope to realise, guide forward what is America's essential task at present faster or more completely than anarchic America herself is now doing? *Such* "Anarchy" has a great deal to say for itself.'"

Those are my sentiments, and, apart from my sentiments, I don't believe that our constituencies will stand the autoritarian evangel.

Now and then, after the serious business of a meal was over, he would with ironic strokes preach me a pointed homily on the whole duty of journalistic critics to a friendly Cabinet. On one of these occasions I wrote to him:

I fear that I cannot come to dine with you on the 5th, as you are kind enough to ask me to do. The Durham

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Miners have their annual turn-out that day, and as I missed last year, I am half bound to go this—if they ask me, which they are pretty sure to do. The Northumbrian Miners vote by lodges for the two speakers to be invited to their feast. My name heads the poll, with 118 votes: Cowen is at the bottom, with 6. I wish I could have come; for one of your drastic desserts like the one you regaled me with last Thursday must, I fancy, be very good for one. So wholesome, even if not nice to the palate; such an infallible specific against vanity, undue self-esteem, and the other morbid growths of that queer thing, the human mind. The next morning to restore myself I hastened to read Cicero de Amicitia, Seneca de Ira, Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiae, the demonstration of the Stoics, Nec injuriam, nec contumeliam accipere Sapientem, and finally, some of the lengthier discourses of Mentor to that young ass, Telemachus. *Addio, addio.* "Dr. Goldsmith," cried Dr. Johnson in a loud voice, "something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill."

Needless to say he was prompt to own his sin, and offered to apologise at any time, in any place, and in any language I pleased. "You have two faults," he once said, "you are sensitive and you are reserved. It was wrong to think that I meant anything amiss, and if you thought so, it was wrong not to have it out." "Let me tell you something," I answered. "A man's weak points are usually parts of his strong ones, if he is lucky enough to have any. Sensitiveness is an element or counterpart of sympathy, and a gift of sympathy either in a public man or anybody else is a tower of strength. Reserve, again, is an element in Pride, and pride of the right sort is a tower of strength too. There's a dose of pocket psychology, of which I make you a present." In truth he did not need it, for to the world at large he was reserved enough, and he surprised the House of Commons by his emotion at a graceful and sincere tribute paid by Mr. Gladstone to his son's first speech.

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His annual holiday was a matter of principle; it was a needed refreshment of spirit. We made a dozen or more expeditions abroad together. Friendships do not always survive the ordeal of long journeys. We two underwent the test year after year without a ripple. He was a delightful companion, patient, good-natured, observant, interested in pictures, buildings, history; alert, and not without a pleasant squeeze of lemon to add savour to the daily dish. We had not an insipid hour. I have read of two eminent contemporaries of ours who spent five delightful weeks together alone in a villa on the Riviera; when they parted one of them said to the other, "Not a single observation of mine that you have not contested." One envies this activity of full minds, but the politician who fights hardest when he takes the field, is often the least pugnacious when he is off duty. Once in a journey from Munich to Salzburg in 1876 at the roadside stations we heard loud "hochs," and found ourselves in a train bearing the great master of Europe. We slumbered under the same roof at a Salzburg hotel that night. *Bismarckium tantum vidimus*, but our vision was full and interesting. As a boy I was just in time to catch sight of the Duke of Wellington. In Paris we made two, three, or four visits to Gambetta, who received us each time with the open cordiality that made him one of the most attractive of men in private, as he was then for too short a span one of the most powerful in the public affairs of his country. We made friends with Cherbuliez, a publicist of much knowledge and sensible principles, and the author of lively and ingenious fiction that gave both of us uncommon pleasure.

We stayed at Liége with Laveleye, then a publicist of European note, as different from Gambetta as any grave, well-informed, careful thinker ever was different from any tempestuous

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man of action. Then and for long years to come Laveleye had a thousand speculative misgivings about democracy. Chamberlain for his part only knew in those days that his concern was to work democracy and its forms in Great Britain as he found them. The two met frequently, and felt mutual pleasure and respect, but they had not really much to say to one another. Clemenceau came later, and as the three of us broke up after a long déjeuner at the Café Anglais I had a feeling that my companion had a good deal more affinity in type with his new French acquaintance than with the Belgian. A dream came before his vision, as we two sauntered on to the boulevard, of practical co-operation with Clemenceau in the common interest of European democracy. Alas, like the dream of the international socialists, such union had far too little common basis against divergent tongues, race, tradition, economic interest, spiritual faith.

Full-fledged imperialism in Chamberlain was the growth of a later decade. Free Trade was not unimpugned, but no rival policy took root. It is, however, an error to suppose that Chamberlain ever had anything like complete sympathy with the Manchester programme. His friendship with Dilke naturally went some way in accounting for this at his early stages. As I was writing about Cobden towards the end of the seventies, our talk naturally fell now and again upon colonies, non-intervention, foreign policy. Without any formal declarations of dissent, I still had an instinctive feeling that the orthodox Cobdenic word was by no means sure of a place in the operations of the future leader. So in the case of Ireland. On returning from my first visit to Ireland (1882) I broke the journey home at Highbury. He was eager to know my impressions. My visit had not made me any headlong convert to Repeal or even Autonomy,

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but it bettered our case at the time for the remedial bill and against coercion bills. We had, therefore, nothing to quarrel about, for on these two cardinal points we had warmly agreed. But I felt that he was slow to realise the scale, the proportions, the prodigious magnitude and complexity of the Irish problem, not only in Ireland, but wherever Irishmen were gathered and could make trouble for us.

In after years Mr. Gladstone found a standing puzzle in the long intimacy between Chamberlain and me. "You are not only different," he used to say: "man and wife are often different, but you two are the very contradiction." Of these contradictions I must obviously be the last person in the world to attempt a catalogue. Looking back I only know that men vastly my superiors, alike in letters and the field of politics, have held me in kind regard and cared for my friendship. I do not try to analyse or explain. Such golden boons in life are self-sufficing. The general terms of character are apt to have but a lifeless air. Differences as sharp as ever divided public men by and by arose between us two on burning questions of our time. Breaks could not be avoided; they were sharp, but they left no scars. Fraternal memories readily awoke. As his end drew near, we sent one another heartfelt words of affectionate farewell. Meanwhile for thirteen strenuous years we lived the life of brothers.

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CHAPTER II

THE COMING DANGER

Reflect seriously on the possible consequences of keeping in the hearts of your community a bank of discontent, every hour accumulating, upon which every company of seditious men may draw at pleasure.—BURKE.

Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit. The same creature, in his farther progress, is engaged to establish political society, in order to administer justice, without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. We are therefore to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice, or, in other words, the support of the twelve judges. Kings and parliaments, fleets and armies, officers of the court and revenue, ambassadors, ministers and privy councillors, are all subordinate in the end to this part of administration.—HUME.

I

CHAMBERLAIN did all he could to press me into action and to play a part in congregations of the faithful. I became at home upon the platform. Our fellowship lent me political credit even among those for whom Rousseau and Diderot were too strong meat, compared with which Chamberlain's profession of Unitarianism was a passable orthodoxy. All this needs no particular commemoration. Our union began to count for something new in the Liberal hope and anticipation of the day.

The general election of 1880 was drawing near, when the great struggle between Gladstone and Beaconsfield was to close. If the Liberals should win, a new struggle was inevitable between two dividing schools in the victorious host. In foreign

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policy the gale blew hard against all extended engagements. Labour was coming into new view among political forces. On the eve of 1882, a whimsical genius had uncharitably described the "game-bagging, poacher-shooting, foot-path-stopping, common-enclosing, rack-renting, and the other pursuits that make a country gentleman an ornament to the world, and a blessing to the poor." On all this the time had come for laying a vigorous hand. The questions were who should lead, and what should be the pace. Chamberlain wrote me a long letter from Southbourne at the beginning of the year (Jan. 25, 1880), lamenting that I had not been present at "eventful and exciting conversations with Harcourt," for whom, he said, they "immensely increased his personal liking." The point of the situation was the enormous advance made by the Whigs in Harcourt's person.

Look through the enclosed letter as an illustration of the spirit in which he approached the matter—and then please return immediately, as it is of course private, and I hardly like to let it out of my hands.

We discussed the possible Liberal Government of the future—the great difficulty is, of course, Gladstone. H. says if he (G.) means to be chief, nothing can prevent him—but it is impossible that he should take a second position. There is not the least chance of his going to the Lords. H. himself says he would urge G. to take the lead, if he were convinced it would be best for the election—he admits it would rouse the enthusiasm of all good Liberals, but fears that in close contests the moderates would be frightened and tail off. I told him (and Dale afterwards still more strongly) that I had no doubt the balance of advantage would be greatly in favour of G.'s lead—though I did not conceal my own personal feeling that he would be King Stork, and that some of us frogs would have a hard time of it under him.

They have been thinking of Lord Derby as a colleague, but I exerted all my eloquence against this idea. Childers—or more probably Goschen, if he could get over the County Suffrage—would be C. of Exchequer. H. himself

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would take Attorney-General—if he were allowed a seat in Cabinet, which seems reasonable.

As to Radicals only this—when I was speaking of "you," H. interrupted, "Why don't you say we? I have never concealed from myself that a Liberal Government is impossible unless the Radicals are fully represented, and it is absurd to suppose that we could carry anything without your cordial assistance."

My reply was, "Give us a policy we like, and you may be certain of our assistance whether in or out of the Government."

For programme of legislation—County Suffrage, but separate from Redistribution, which must be postponed—County Boards really representative on the model of Town Councils—and some considerable measure of Land Reform. For Ireland, Bright's proposals—Extension of Franchise, both Parliamentary and Municipal, and arrangements for transferring local business, including local Acts of Parliament, to Dublin.

The assembly of the new Parliament in 1880 was accompanied by many excitements. Lord Beaconsfield, who had fought the battle of a strong career for fifty years or more, had been finally displaced from his hard-won ascendancy. The statesman who had so long been his parliamentary rival, and whose temperament, gifts, character, and governmental ideas had been for all those years so alien to his own, had carried the day at the polls by grand acclamation. The interesting question whom the Queen would choose to send for as Beaconsfield's successor was lively and acute. The victorious party still bore marks of many-coloured divisions, both personal and political, that had grievously perturbed them since their eloquent and impassioned chief had withdrawn from leadership in 1875. That question was settled against the desires of the Sovereign by Mr. Gladstone's return to Downing Street. All the schools of movement, and especially the school of peace, were confident of the speedy dawn of a Second Advent, and those who knew too much of

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parliamentary business and its devious ways, though not confident, were still hopeful. Amid all this animated bustle, what was incomparably the most vital circumstance of the time escaped more than superficial attention, in spite of the dethroned Prime Minister's pregnant warning. Ireland, Lord Beaconsfield said, in words that rapidly became notable, was distracted by a danger scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine.

It needed strong pressure both from Harcourt and Bright to induce the new Prime Minister to propose office to leading representatives of the Radical wing. Mr. Gladstone had never a perfect judgment of the relative value and importance of men, nor, perhaps, I might add, of the significance of what only looked like minor movements in his party. He considered Bright as the one Radical he needed, and to Bright he adhered, among other reasons, on the rule that though it is a serious thing to take a man into a Cabinet, it is a more serious thing to leave a man out who has once been taken in. It was noted by adverse critics as an omen of evil significance, that fourteen of the Cabinet were members of the Cobden Club. Chamberlain and Dilke claimed a seat for one of them in the Cabinet, and an outside post for the other. In the end Chamberlain went into the Cabinet as head of the Board of Trade, after it had been refused by Whitbread, the wisest and most unselfish of Whigs. Dilke became Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, with Lord Granville for his chief. I dined privately with the two new Radical ministers on the day when all was settled, and had my first vision of the red boxes which already began their ceaseless flow from the Foreign Department, then on the eve of unforeseen troubles that lasted as long as the administration itself. While we three ate our meal and went deep into the thousand topics of the

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occasion, for me too, as it happened, new destinies were waiting.

In a week or two I took charge of an evening print that had been raised to well-deserved prominence by the talents, industry, and zealous political sincerity of its first editor. Greenwood had a most ingenious pen, his judgments alike in politics and letters were independent without being flighty, the topics that interested and absorbed him were well chosen and thoroughly worked, and he attracted a staff of writers of ampler literary training than his own; but they owed much to the liveliness, gaiety, and clever pointed insight of an editor who, from his early days as a journeyman printer, had carried on a hard fight with naked realities of life, and had learned to explore them with energetic and unquenched spirit. He soon began to do his best to encourage a vigorous all-round reaction against the Liberalism associated with Mill in one field and Gladstone in another. Hitherto he had taken it on trust as other people took it; but as things went on, as the incidental drawbacks of the creed came into view, a Tory instinct that has often quite as deep a root in born sons of toil as in nobility and gentry, revolted both against theories of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and against crusades of sentimental passion for turning the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe. Of this gallant ship, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of which Jingo ideas had thus been the cargo, I now undertook to be the captain, under a liberal-minded and courageous owner, as loyal and bold as he was indulgent. We were lucky enough to induce to join us as assistant a man from the North of England, who by and by, sailing under his own flag, became for a season the most powerful journalist in the island. Stead has said enough of our relations. He was invaluable: abounding in journalistic resource, eager in convictions, infinitely bold,

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candid, laborious in surefooted mastery of all the facts, and bright with a cheerfulness and geniality that no difference of opinion between us and none of the passing embarrassments of the day could ever for a moment damp. His extraordinary vigour and spirit made other people seem wet blankets, sluggish, creatures of mofal *défaillance*. After a striking career that was not without melodramatic phases and some singular vagaries of mind, he perished in a collision between a giant liner and an iceberg on the Atlantic Ocean.

II

Lord Beaconsfield's prediction of a coming danger, scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, speedily came true: agitation and bloodshed in Ireland, violence and confusion in Parliament. The ragged Sphinx had once more come forth with deadly weapons under her tatters. In the days of Whiteboy crime, shortly after the Reform Bill (1835), Cornewall Lewis had attacked the fatal Irish question with force and knowledge, moved by the national scandal of an insecurity of persons and property in Ireland, more like the wildest districts of Calabria and Greece than anything else in Europe. He recalled Bacon's story of the Spanish commander, who vowed that when the Devil upon the Mount showed Christ all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, he left Ireland out and kept it for himself. Lewis was far too much a man of his own generation to resort to a superhuman demon for mischiefs easily to be explained by the unwisdom of poor man, nor did he carry despair to the point of Giraldus Cambrensis, who decided that the Irish question would be settled a little while before the Day of Judgment.

Then among serious writers came Mill. He was

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of the school who have faith in the indubitable access to people's minds of any good argument; who dream that man will see light, will measure the poise and balance of reason, will shift from right limb to left, and be roused from slumber to determined act, if you only seek his ear with a case persuasive on the merits. Yet against this we all know that in political action it is event and circumstance—what seems accident, if you like—on which the efficacy of your counsel turns. Mill wrote a pamphlet (1860) exposing the Irish land question in its true light as a main root of Irish disturbance. He brought Indian experience to bear against the almost unchallenged "superstitions of landlordism," and he mixed with his views on the ruin wrought by those blind and ruthless superstitions as applied to Ireland some plain language against our general misgovernment there. At the same time he made what he took to be a strong argument to show that separation between the two countries was equally undesirable for both. He was not at all unconscious of the menace that was every day gaining fresh ground against our system. In ten years the menace had grown to be a reality of startling urgency. The Irish revolution—begun by Catholic Emancipation, transformed by Famine and Emigration, and consummated by the Franchise Act of 1884, which gave the Irish national forces their political chance—had entered on a decisive though protracted stage that Mill did not live to see. His piece was not a success: it even gave a slight shock to his pontifical authority among economists.

The new Parliament had not been long in session before it felt the urgency of Irish affairs. Disorder, attended by all the hateful cruelties that mark every jacquerie, gradually spread over large areas; evidence against perpetrators of agrarian crime could not be procured; juries were unwilling to

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convict; constabulary and clergy were impotent; military power was useless. The difference between this new scene and the too familiar operations in older days of Ribandmen, Whiteboys, and the rest of the lawless calendar, was the appearance of an Irish group in the House of Commons, working with hands of iron to extort the satisfaction of a revolutionary aim out of constitutional forms, with all the glare of lurid sidelights from agrarian insurrection.

Few chapters of our history do us so little honour as the quarrel between England and Ireland in the five years from 1880. The Cabinet gave up an existing coercion law in July. It introduced a bill for compensating the dispossessed tenants; but that was rejected by the House of Lords, in which Irish landlords alone, undiluted by a single interloper from the popular camp, represented the people of their country. In these five years the ordinary law was three times suspended against evildoers, and then by what passed for logical necessity the franchise was extended so as to give the party of the evildoers a decision in making and administering ordinary law. When the last card had been played against the Irish leader, some sort of arrangement with him became just as inevitable as the Iron Duke's first great step in emancipation half a century earlier. This time it was Chamberlain who, with much courage and self-denial, played the part of agent in the new departure. That story I have told elsewhere.

The fact that I have just mentioned about Irish land in the Upper House was the Irish question in a nutshell. We need not go over the particulars of Tudor, Cromwellian, Williamite and other confiscations, or plantations in Ulster and Leinster. Well may learned Irish writers compare the clean sweep of the landowners to the clean sweep of landlords from Bohemia, or from Alpine provinces of

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Hapsburgs, or of the Moriscos from Spain. Well may they point out how the policy of to-day, after frightful discords and at enormous cost, is the undoing of the work of confiscation and the gradual restoration of the land to the older race. There is no injustice in the observation that the balance of power in a state rests with the class that holds the balance of the land, or in the further statement of a fact of modern history that the laws affecting Irish land, the great vital Irish interest, have been effectively controlled by the peerage, without a single representative among them, direct or indirect, of the vast mass of the population of Ireland.

At the end of 1880 Mr. Gladstone said to the Speaker of the House of Commons: "During more than thirty-seven years since I first entered a Cabinet, I have hardly known so difficult a question of administration as that of the immediate duty of the Government in the present state of Ireland." Coercion was of course the standardised medicine that always left the malady where it was, unless it made it worse. Three successive doses, as I have said, were administered in these five years. As to the first Coercion Act, Bright frankly admitted before the Parliament came to an end: "I think the legislation of 1881 was unfortunately a great mistake, though I was myself a member of the Government concerned in it." In the *Pall Mall Gazette* we fought against that mistake steadily from evening to evening, mainly on the ground that it would prove ineffective for its own special purpose, and would prejudice besides the reception of remedial legislation. The remedial legislation came in the shape of the Land Act of 1881, and Mr. Gladstone told Parliament in 1898 that if there had been no Land League, there would have been no Land Act. The tenant party found flaws in it, and Parnell, after some days of doubt and perplexity as to his tactics, prepared test

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cases likely to throw a shadow on the Act. The Government decided to arrest him; one morning before breakfast he found himself transported to the prison at Kilmainham. For a print of ministerial colour that had resisted Coercion in January, it was awkward to defend the application of it in November, as the following letter to Chamberlain may show:

October 19, 1881.

As you may suppose, I have not had a particularly good time of it since we parted, for the post brings me letters every day, and everybody that I meet in these dens talks as if I had got myself into an absurd fix, and were vainly trying to wriggle myself off the hook. That would not matter a pin, if I did not really feel in a fix.

Bright wrote me a long letter (unsolicited) on Monday—perceiving the difficulty of my position, but saying that it is all my own fault for opposing Coercion in January. This makes it undeniably a ticklish thing to defend Coercion in October. I have read your letter most carefully, and shall read it again—until I seize some working point of view. Of course if I were like —— I could turn round straight in a night. —— doesn't mind being told that he is a spaniel who will run and pick up any dirty stick that Gladstone throws. I do mind rather. And I mind it the more because in my heart I feel that the League has done downright good work in raising up the tenants against their tyrants; and with this leaning at the back of my mind, I have not been able all at once to call the League bad names.

Then the tone of people I meet—even Liberals—makes me boil. Parnell ought to be hung—transported—blown from a gun—anything you please! This sort of insane rage hardens my heart.

All this I say to you by way of excuse and apology for a "wobbliness" which nobody is more conscious of, or more disgusted by, than I am.

I wish to heaven you were here, for I stand absolutely alone, between lunatics of the —— stamp, and bloodthirsty dunces like the —— and the oracles of clubs.

You are quite right in saying that we are in the same boat; there is a regular run against both Bright and you.

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"Why now if not then?" "Why don't they resign?" etc., etc., etc. I only hope you won't go too hot against the League at Liverpool; or at any rate that you will not lend yourself by a phrase even to this cowardly howl.

The thing must be stopped I agree. As the Government chose Coercion, it must be stopped by that means. When one comes to explain why we only think this now, it is possible to give a good account of oneself—but it implies a sort of apologetic air which does not come very kindly, I fancy, to either of us.

Since I began my letter, I receive one from Lord Houghton. Here it is: "The *Pall Mall* is in a fix [regular phrase]. Gladstone is repeating himself. More than half a Papist, he turned on poor Pope Pius like an Orangeman, when he thought that the Vatican opposed his Irish University Scheme. Just so he lets the Irish Jacobins loose, till they come into contact with his Socialist measures, and now he will go any lengths against them, even before the Act has come into action at all." That's the sort of thing. However, we won't give up. But my painfully unstatesmanlike aversion to John Bull in a passion makes me a bad hand at this moment. Your letter has done me good.

I will certainly come on the 29th if the office will let me —even if it be only for a night.

What words I found to extricate myself, I have forgotten; I hope they were decently consistent with editorial self-respect and faithful duty to one's readers. Against Coercion as a policy we went on persistently.

In April 1882 I printed an article which was in fact a large and reasoned exposure of the utter failure of the Irish government, and an argument that change both of policy and persons was inevitable. The first effect, as I had foreseen, was to provoke a kind of reaction in Mr. Forster's favour, but the reaction was not strong and did not last. The failure was too undeniable and embarrassments too flagrant. "My thunderbolt," I wrote to Chamberlain, "has made a stir, for the reason that it is believed to have been inspired by you. You very well know that I would go far to avoid

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saying a syllable that would damage you. For the moment you may have been compromised by my frankness of speech, whatever compromising comes to. I need not say that if any embarrassment comes upon you from my manifesto, I shall look to you to dissociate yourself from it in the most emphatic way that you may think fit." What Chamberlain had to say was this :

The immediate result has been to establish a kind of reaction in favour of Forster. I do not believe that Mr. G. could dismiss him at this moment even if he desired to do so. The position of his successor would be almost intolerable—especially if a malevolent fate should select one of the members for Birmingham for this post. The enclosed came to me the other day and does not at all surprise me. I felt that it was certain that I should be accused of a base attempt to oust the Chief Secretary. It does not matter as things stand, but if there were any idea of a change, a feeling of this kind would gather strength and would do much to destroy any chance of success which I might otherwise have had. I doubt whether the British public is ready even for a change of policy just yet—let alone a change of persons. But you have set them thinking and they will get used to both ideas in time.

I wish you could openly advocate Shaw—an Irishman—as Chief Secretary. H. is not certain that the electors would reject him. It would be an appeal to them to aid in the creation of a new policy and they might rise to the occasion. If they did not, at least the English Government would be free from reproach and would have tried to rule Ireland by the Irish.

A fortnight later (May 2), going down to the House of Commons, I heard in the lobbies that Forster was out. The fever of excitement may be imagined. Chamberlain sent out word asking me to be sure to dine with him. Harcourt said to Chamberlain : " Your mischievous friend, J. M., has done this." As matter of fact Forster was not at all the man to quail before a leading article, and whatever other reasons he may have had for quitting

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the Irish Office—and the change in his authority by the new appointment of a Cabinet Viceroy may have been one of them—there was nothing unnatural in his distrust of a policy of conciliation in concert with a man of whom he thought as ill as he thought of Parnell. It was in the mind of everybody, with the exception of the Prime Minister, that Chamberlain would be bound to take Forster's most unenviable place. I dined with him on Monday and Tuesday, May 1 and 2. I, at any rate, and I suspect he too, looked for a message from Mr. Gladstone at any moment. On the Tuesday evening, after dinner, he went to an evening party at Downing Street, and there first learned that Lord F. Cavendish was to go to Ireland. If the Irish Office had been proposed to Chamberlain, he would have accepted it as matter of public duty, for he had been the most strenuous opponent of Forster's policy. But he would have accepted it with the very natural expectation that it would destroy him, as it had destroyed Forster.

The desperate tragedy that followed in the Phoenix Park (May 6) made the Sunday morning when the news was spread in London an hour never to be forgotten. The cruel fate of the two victims, its demonstration that the policy of coercion had failed, made an occasion of indescribable pain and infinite political perplexity. The assault on some of us was naturally severe and loud, both public and private. Alfred Lyall, best and most reflective of friends, wrote to me in a warm strain against the lesson that we were "teaching the dangerous classes in India, when you show that men can terrorise by assassination within a few miles of England." "I suppose," he concluded, "that you are all deafened by the roar of London talk. I think it stupefies public men, and is thus bringing parliamentary government into paralysis of all organs but the tongue." I find my reply to this has been deemed

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worth printing in his biography, so it may be of interest, and here it is:

May 31, 1882.

I don't wonder that you should be strongly moved at the hideous crime in the Phoenix Park. You may imagine what a blow it was to us on the spot, especially coming as it did in the moment of a sharp political crisis. Never shall I forget the shock of that terrible Sunday.

But I don't at all follow your moral about the "incapacity of the English people." Surely we are not the first society in the world that has found it easier said than done to deal with a jacquerie or with secret societies. You say we are disgraced in the eyes of Europe: does Russia find it so easy to put down Nihilists? Did Austria beat the Italian Carbonari?

I don't agree with you that the first duty of governments is "to protect life"—if you mean that they are to think of nothing else at the same time. Such talk is merely in principle the talk of George III. and Lord North—"We must preserve the authority of the British Crown and Parliament; we won't parley with rebels; let them surrender, and then we'll see." "No," said wise men like Burke, "conciliate them." For my own part, like Chatham in that case, "I rejoice that Ireland has resisted." Our neglect has been infamous. The landlords have been as greedy and insolent a set of tyrants as ever ground the face of the poor in any country in the world. I hope that the hour of their destruction is now striking. In the face of a great issue of this sort I am not going to turn pale and run away because one or two of the common atrocities of civil war (very few, indeed, mark you) are perpetrated. I am thoroughly glad that the French landlords were sent flying for their lives a hundred years ago in spite of the bloodshed and injustice which marked the process.

"What sort of a lesson," you ask, "are we teaching the dangerous classes in India?" You mean that we are to bully the Irish in order that you may bully the Indian. Well, that's not my notion of the fitness of things. I have no particular objection to your getting up Afghan wars, and trifles of that kind, for the sake of overawing your dangerous classes, but I have the very liveliest objection in the world to making the dangerous classes in India the arbiters in the domestic struggles of our own country. If

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this is to be an argument, I shall at last throw in my lot, might and main, with the "Perish India" sect.

But now, look. I am as much for order—even temporary and provisional order—as you are. You never quite understood my hostility to the policy of coercion. . . . Yet the Government found out that I was right. The Coercion Bill has practically vanished . . . and Lord Spencer is doing exactly what I said all along ought to be done, not locking up politicians by *lettre de cachet*, but thoroughly reorganising the police. That ought to have been done at first—mere bullying isn't governing, and it has unmistakably failed.

Now, my dear Lyall, I am out of breath. Excuse me if I have been too vivacious. The truth is that I have fought this battle pretty much alone; and that produces a certain tension in the mind. But be sure that your heresies don't make me any the less than heretofore ever your very grateful and very affectionate J. M.

This vivacity was justified in a supplemental epistle by pungent references to Arthur Young, *Castle Rackrent*, and some truly striking pages where for our own generation Lockhart describes the impression made on Sir Walter Scott who visited Ireland in 1825—how the "heart of the stranger was sickened by such widespread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism"; how the Protestants of the old school struck Sir Walter as "a fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of a country; they remind me of the Spaniards in Mexico"; how he found a constant moral affront in the contrast between the luxurious mansion and the squalid cabins upon whose rent the mansion is nourished; it affected him and poisoned his enjoyment. "The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on short service; the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every wayside, and blocked up every village where we

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had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation—such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive; and above all the contrast between these naked, clamorous beggars who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly-scattered magnates who condescend to inhabit their ancestral seats."

It was nearly sixty years after this cruel picture that I made my first visit to the country of which I was soon to see so much. I remembered Macaulay's noble eloquence about the great party which traces its descent through the Exclusionists up to the Roundheads, continuing during thirty years in spite of royal persons and popular clamours to demand a share in all the benefits of our free constitution for those Irish Papists, whom the Roundheads and the Exclusionists had considered merely as beasts of chase or as beasts of burden. I thought rather ruefully of his hope that wisdom and justice should do in Ireland what it had done in Scotland, and that all the races inhabiting the British Isles might be indissolubly blended into one people. It was as unhappy as his famous prediction about Indian education that thirty-five years after its introduction not a single idolater would be found in India. The great Whig experiment had been tried for two generations. Yet Ireland looked worse than it had ever looked since the Rebellion of 1798, whose last struggles had taken place in the Wicklow Hills, whose Seven Golden Spears give the traveller his first vision of the changing beauties of the land.

I went about in Ireland in the company of an official expert in land, rent, tenants' improvements, evictions, and the rest of that dolorous long story; saw powerful agents who were a strange mixture of Legree and the Plymouth Brother; saw a hundred

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cases of the confiscation of tenants' improvements such as figure wholesale in the Blue Books, Devon Commission, Bessborough Commission, and the rest of that most overloaded and unedifying shelf. I mentioned to a very important civil officer a tale of coercion warrants told me at Dromore—the point being that it was a toss-up which of two opposing sets of men should be locked up, and that possibly the wrong men had been arrested after all. "No matter," says the official, "so long as somebody or other was arrested; the great thing is to show them Force somehow." If you please, but then do not forget this is a game for two.

One could not be blind or deaf to the obvious fact that the bitterest complaints on the lips of the Irish tenant were constantly to be found directed not against his landlord, but either against his own father for dividing the farm, or his brother for marrying, or his neighbour for bidding against him. The efforts of the League have been as much directed against the covetousness of tenants in face of one another, as against the covetousness of landlords and agents. The root of this class of mischief is well understood by anybody who has studied the condition of the old system of land-holding. In face of such a system, the good side of Irish character has been evident and splendid —its patience, resignation, cheerfulness, good humour. It was time for a Land League. The men arbitrarily arrested were more often than not the most respectable and influential in the neighbourhood. Energetic characters turned to nationalism. At tables d'hôte, when politics came up, I was sometimes reminded of what was said of the revolutionists in Russia at that time, that they lived in a thick fog of confused ideas. But then I am not sure in these distracted days that this would not have been just as true of luncheon talk about Ireland among distinguished and in-

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fluential friends of mine at the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall.

We all know what happened. Within three years Parliament lowered the qualification for a vote. This instantly proved itself one of the cardinal landmarks in our history. When the election came, Parnell won 85 out of 89 contests by overwhelming majorities, his men all pledged to obey or else to go. One-fourth of them had been locked up in prison under the Coercion Act of 1881. Three or four pages in my book on Mr. Gladstone analyse the significance of this sweeping national protest with an accompaniment of appropriate Te Deums and Songs of Miriam. Nothing more of that very seasonable music is needed here to-day.

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CHAPTER III

PARLIAMENT

We know how power and responsibility change men in matters of this world. They become more serious, more vigilant, more circumspect, more practical, more decisive; they fear to commit mistakes, yet they dare more, because they have a consciousness of liberty and of power.—NEWMAN.

I

OF all the thousand felicities of youth what can surpass the elation of a literary apprentice, free from tyrannous ambition and conscious of disinterested public spirit, yet alive to the uses and adaptabilities of life, one day finding a gate open for him in the great parliamentary turnpike road? After seeking a parliamentary seat in Blackburn in 1869, and at Westminster in 1880—both of them forlorn hopes—in the spring of 1883 I was elected member for Newcastle-on-Tyne. Success was mainly due to the influence of Spence Watson, a member of the Society of Friends, active in the field of education, with all the sympathy of the Liberals of his time in the emancipation of certain foreign communities abroad, with a stirring gift of the tongue, and a brave and noble heart. The constituency was the largest, I think, of any borough in the kingdom at that time, and my supporters, though the middle class was not absent, consisted mainly of the skilled artisans of the great Elswick factory and other like concerns of less renown. We held the seat for a dozen years, not without fighting seven severe battles in that short span.

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My colleague to begin with—it was a constituency with two members—was Joseph Cowen, a picturesque figure, of much political information, supposed with or without foundation to have been mysteriously concerned with Orsini and his bombs, affecting the costume and native accent of the Northumbrian pitman, and with an extraordinary gift of florid, impassioned, ingenious and overwrought rhetoric, to which it was impossible to listen without wonder and even admiration, provided, as Bright caustically said of Cowen's last speech in Parliament, you did not attend to what he said. His practical defect was that he could not work with other people; he was always insisting on better bread than could be made of wheat, and though he had all his life truly professed himself the most ardent of Home Rulers, we were forced in our many struggles to count him as an enemy, not a friend. He was much swayed by easily irritated personal prepossessions, in a domain that ought to stand, so far as infirmities of human nature will allow, above such dire impediments to love of plain truth for its own sake. As it happened, he violently disliked and distrusted the Liberal leader and all the coin that came from the Gladstonian mint.

A transition from books, study, and the publicist's pen to the vicissitudes of political action is not much favoured by happy precedents. Let us not be shy of going too far back. The most historically influential type among famous men of letters, say what we will, is Cicero, the immortal, the all-wise Tully, and we know Cicero's blood-stained end on the Italian sea-shore, attended by the ill-omened flight of crows from the temple of Apollo. To pass to nearer times and more moderate names. We need say nothing of Clarendon, Halifax, Bolingbroke, or Addison, the first of half a dozen men of letters who held the post of Irish Secretary.

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The practice has been commoner in France than here, where in fact it has been rare, with Macaulay, Disraeli, Bulwer, for exceptions. Tocqueville, for instance, was a publicist of the first order, but a third-rate minister. Frenchmen will tell you that the literary event of the early nineteenth century was Chateaubriand's *Genius of Christianity* (1802), the most superb rainbow that ever rose in a storm-beaten sky. By and by this great writer, who did not fear Napoleon, took to politics on the Bourbon side, wrote a pamphlet so effective that Louis XVIII. counted it worth a whole army, then became an ardent member of the worst of restoration ministries, went to the Congress of Verona to advocate the worst of policies, tempted France into her war with Spain. To-day the book that once was a spring from which a flow of moral ideas flowed over a new generation is dead, its writer's politics are matter of universal condemnation, and his name seems sunk under long eclipse. Thiers, the ablest if not the greatest Frenchman of his century after Waterloo had closed an era, said he would willingly give the writing of ten successful histories for a single happy session in the Assembly, or a single fortunate campaign in arms. Thiers, however, had a weakness for loud superlatives of this kind, as when he declared that rather than see the Austrian eagle on the Vatican, he would destroy a hundred constitutions and a hundred religions. Most of the men I have known would rather have written the *Decline and Fall* than have been Mr. Pitt. In the present case, that immortal history assuredly was no more within reach and compass than were the triumphs of Austerlitz, Rossbach, or Trafalgar. The choice was the more modest selection between an outdoor publicist on the one hand, and member of the House of Commons on the other, with all the advantages of a wider and closer field of political

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observation, and all the chances of influence that this position carries with it.

With cordial solicitude Arnold had pressed me three years before to aspire to the place held in Paris at the time by a serious and admirable journalist—"a proud and very useful place, where you would be more useful, happier, more yourself, than in Parliament." A man might well be proud of being thought of in association with John Lemoinne—the most perfect example of the political journalist, as he has been well described, to whose nature the complacent banalities of the hour were antipathetic, whose style was short, clear, neat; abounding in body without inflation; who went straight to point and fact with the speed and lightness of a well-shot arrow from the bow; whose voice amid the daily clamour of a hundred journals detached itself with the ring of true metal. Perhaps Arnold was right; he was certainly kind, for such a place was no mean prize. Who knows? A great scholar of our day has observed that the studious man is more apt in practice to over-rate than undervalue those who are engaged in active life. No doubt he has to leave some of the favourite parcels of his baggage at the door of the House, but then politics are not by any means the only profession of which this is true. There are men enough, though not too many, to show that a man may be idealist without being doctrinaire or what has been called a walking theorem, and practical without being pure empiric. Half a dozen English writers were then of eminent rank in political equipment, and very considerable in their interest for readers of training in books and ideas like their own. But I have heard every one of them complain that any influence of his on responsible statesmen was of a peculiarly academic sort (though one or two financial experts among them were from time to time casually consulted), and their political friendship was no

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better and no worse than platonic. No wonder: for it is all-round responsibility for one thing, and fuller knowledge of decisive facts for another, that make all the difference. However this may have been, no words can really be needed to explain why now and then a man should grow wearied of decent proficiency among the horns and strings of the orchestra, and resolve to try his tread upon the stage, where, besides the declamations of the scene, he is freshened by pithy asides in the coulisses. A man to be sure ought to be himself, as Arnold said, but he is strangely fortunate if, as Horace put it to Maecenas, he does not in his hour wish to be somebody else.

In my example were some antecedents that exposed an experiment to peculiar risks It seemed absurd for one who had begun on the literary side of his life by repudiating conventions, to launch into political action which has for its very first working principle compliance with conventions. What was the sense of a chartered preacher against Men-pleasers embarking on an enterprise whose whole chance of success depended, either in a broad or narrow sense, on pleasing a majority out of 20,000 or 30,000 men with votes, and, apart from votes, with some decided convictions and prejudices on sacred things having nothing to do with Parliament? The party enemy on the Tyne was naturally not slow to let fly his bolts against my theological opinions, and of that I made no complaint. I declined to answer questions, and I only made a single reference to the matter in two or three sentences, in which I promised them that it should be my last, as indeed it was. "Religion," I said, "has many dialects, many diverse complexions, but it has one true voice, the voice of human pity, of mercy, of patient justice, and to that voice your candidate, to the best of his knowledge and belief, has always done all he

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could to listen." I frankly confessed that when I learned how some good men and women were distressed and perplexed by hostile asseveration to my disadvantage in this great chapter of human things, I had been much inclined to wish that I had never come among them to disturb their peace and comfort of mind. Here all public utterances on the matter came to what most people regarded as an honourable end, nor was I ever conscious of the cold shoulder in private.

II

On the day—so glorious in the anticipation of men—when he was to walk up the floor with me to take my seat, Chamberlain warned me that after the opening hours men found that life in the House of Commons answered none of their expectations. At first, like other people, I did not escape disappointments, but I soon reflected that what was good enough for men like Gladstone and Bright was quite good enough for me. Clarendon says of Coventry, Lord Keeper in King Charles's day, that "he had in the plain way of speaking and delivery, without much ornament of elocution, a strange power of making himself believed, the only justifiable design of eloquence." No bad aim for any sober man's ambition in any day. So, without any special aptitudes for the House, except a general desire to speak the truth, which is one of its surest aptitudes, I was bound to persevere, and people were indulgent. The daily comradeship of men of action blessed with good sense and public spirit, engaged in common causes, must be counted one of the truest pleasures of life, notwithstanding even Burns's "dear deluding joy of joys." The inspiration of such comradeship was not in the least marred by the double-edged sayings of ancient wisdom about friends turning into foes,

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and your enemy of to-day becoming your ally of the morrow.

The waste of time, where so much of it goes to what has the singular peculiarity of being neither business nor rest, to one whose years had been industrious and practical, was not far short of heart-breaking, though perhaps after all the House of Commons is by no means the place where one's waste of time is worst. With a rueful memory I many a time recalled that Franklin and Washington never made speeches more than ten minutes long. I thought of their countryman whose speeches were too lengthy for their pith, and who was compared to a train of fifteen cars only conveying a single passenger. Some mistook popularity for consideration, while others were influential without being popular. Some were useful and meritorious without being interesting. Some presented the painful phenomenon of great talents without great minds —men whom the discovery of a new hare to hunt delighted as if the hare were some new social truth, and who seemed incapable of being either used up or worn out. Then there were the troops of men who not only coveted the "loud applause and Aves vehement" of the majority—that was natural—but with whom it seemed axiomatic that "the country" or "our people" could be the dupe of any claptrap that appeared to fit the humour of an hour. This was far from natural, and committed both individuals and parties to many a dangerous blunder. It was just as true of one British party as of the other.

Randolph Churchill exclaimed to me one day, "Ah, but then Balfour and you are men who believe in the solution of political questions." This belief may or may not be a weakness, yet the alternative that the statesman is a man who does not believe in the solution of political questions, was startling. It was said of Thirlwall's *History*

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that, though his principles of criticism were sound, he always seemed like Lord Eldon to exercise his ingenuity in evading a decision of the question. In the writer of history I for one have no quarrel with this, but it is not politics. In Parliament, as out of it, one sighs heavily over those optimistic hearts who, through blasts that are destroying forests, throwing down strong walls, laying harvests waste, and sweeping away a whole generation of men, keep the fingers on the dial-plate of their barometer nailed firm at "*Set Fair.*" They are mainly useless, and they are provoking. In the House again, as out of it, in synods, oecumenical councils, and everywhere else, are always men who will fight as stubbornly over the thin shadow of a shade of difference as if it was cardinal, fundamental, covered the whole ground, and settled the main case. So there were the kindred men who habitually insist on mistaking the ephemeral for the Day of Judgment.

Much of parliamentary debate is dispute between men who in truth and at bottom agree, but invent arguments to disguise agreement and contrive a difference. It is artificial, but serves a purpose in justifying two lobbies and a party division. You have patiently to learn the wholesome lesson, that wisdom may be wisdom even when she chooses rhetorical apparel. You cannot expect to escape a continual exhibition of the common error of politics, and of much besides, the attribution to one cause of what is the effect of many; nor the vexation of listening to the wrong arguments for the right object. Above all, one often felt the pregnant truth, that most mistakes in politics arise from flat and invincible disregard of the plain maxim that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be. But then here too Parliament is only representative. Nowhere are you more puzzled than in political battle for a working reply

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to Goethe's searching and pathetic interrogatory, "Whatever are we to do with people who mean well?" And what with those who will have it that if a thing be desirable enough it must be possible? In truth the theorist, idealist, doctrinaire, or whatever name we choose for the salt of the earth, is exposed to one curious peril of his own. He often becomes in business excessively, narrowly, and tiresomely pragmatical and opportunist, and actually cultivates near sight. With or without cause he suspects himself, and is bent on showing that he is as fit for the profession of real politics as the best of them. There is a danger in the opposite direction of which I might perhaps have been more sensible. Windham was the idolater of Burke, for whom I should have had none but good words if only, by the way, he had not been the champion of bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and the slave trade. "From the indomitable bravery of his disposition," says Brougham of Windham, "and his loathing of everything mean, or that savoured of truckling to mere power, he was not infrequently led to prefer a course of conduct or a line of argument because of their running counter to public opinion or the general feeling." This is a weakness, however, which Parliament is no bad place to cure.

The ruinous struggle with Irish obstruction that began in 1880 was practically over in 1888, and when all is said on that ugly episode I saw nothing to shake my faith in the inherent virtues of representative government or of the party system, or in the House of Commons as a sovereign institution. The test was severe, for I sat there five-and-twenty years (1883–1908), and for seventeen of them we were in a minority. The House was generally, though by no means always, true to its better traditions. Still, we are bound to be amused at Disraeli's heroic extravagance when he

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was bold enough to say, "No really bad bill is ever passed."

Detestation of elected assemblies was the one rooted conviction in the vague and vacillating brain of Napoleon III., and Bismarck pronounced parliamentary life to have something demoralising in it, making even the best man of the world grow vain, taking to the tribune like women to their toilette. If anybody supposes that troublesome vanity is always absent even from selected cabinets and councils of State, he is much deceived. What satisfaction, and surely not quite out of season, to copy from a letter of Cavour's: "I believe you can do with a Parliament many things that would be impossible to absolute power. An experience of thirteen years has convinced me that an honest and energetic ministry, that has nothing to fear from revelations in the House, and is not in a humour to be frightened by the violence of extreme parties, has everything to gain by parliamentary contests. I have never felt so weak as when Parliament was not sitting. Besides, how could I betray the principles of my life? I am the son of liberty, and it is to liberty I owe all I am. If her statue must be veiled, it is not for me to do it. The parliamentary road is longer, but it is surer." Material for cheap irony about government by majority of votes abounds, but a good enough answer lies in the witticism that we must either count or fight, and counting is better than fighting.

In reading Tocqueville's *Souvenirs* at a later date I was surprised to find his tone so bitter towards nearly every one of his contemporaries. There is a striking passage where he describes his miseries in Parliament, and his essential unfitness for success in an uncongenial atmosphere. One reason was his readiness to turn aside to reflect, instead of acting; though, to be sure, he was a man who might have seen that reflection is often more real than what

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looks like action. There are good expressions and fertile thoughts: these Tocqueville could not miss. Only one could wish that he might have been a trifle easier and more lenient about men who, though not great, were better equipped for the public service than himself. It would be childish to expect a man in affairs to equal the virtue of Wordsworth, who said that in no part of his writing had he ever mentioned the name of any contemporary, that of Buonaparte only excepted, save for the purpose of eulogy. Chateaubriand in his famous six volumes of memories lets out some awkward secrets in his own ostentatious genius, but his vainglory was on so grand a scale that he takes but little trouble either way about other people. There is this to be said for Tocqueville, that he wrote his recollections after 1850, when the iron had entered his soul, when his hopes, public aspirations, private illusions and ideals, had all foundered in the Second Empire. Still, he would have been happier in his memories if he had accepted Gladstone's maxim to a friend, "It is always best to take the charitable view, especially in politics"; or what Cobden said of Palmerston, "I believe he is quite sincere; the older I get, the more do I believe in men's sincerity." These two were men of the high responsible world, and they were great men, perfectly aware of the force of the Medicean truth that States are not governed by paternosters. Eldon once asked Mr. Pitt whether men were governed by decently honourable principles, or oftener by motives low and corrupt. Pitt replied that he had a favourable opinion of men as a whole, and he believed the majority were really actuated as a whole by fair meaning and intention. Let us add to this a rider in the words of Gibbon upon Pitt's great rival, Fox: "Perhaps no human being was ever *more perfectly exempted from the taint of malevolence, vanity, and falsehood.*"

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III

The stream of contention over great issues at Westminster kept its flow. Before the election in 1880 Bismarck observed, justly enough, that in foreign things the incoming Liberals must in general follow the same lines as Beaconsfield. We found Balkan, Egyptian, Transvaal puzzles still at full pressure, and the sword was not returned offhand to the sheath. A new theological sword was drawn, for its time sharper than the others. One of my first votes was for the abolition of a religious test imposed on any member duly chosen by a constituency. Another was for some Irish motion strongly opposed by Government, in which—so short was men's foresight about Irish prospects—I had only the company of two other Liberals. On the many questions about Egypt and the Soudan, I moved an amendment against Ministers, and made the acquaintance of the remarkable and most unsatisfactory type of men who eagerly agreed with its purport, but took it for granted that we should not dream of pressing it to a division. Among these faint hearts were men who might have been expected to know better. The crucial defect even in a superior kind of politician is lack of fibre. He may have knowledge, good principles, sincerity, elevation, but fibre is the best name that I can think of for the quality that is the test for creating, working, and even by the sin of an unpalatable and unpopular division, thrusting forward, a critical moment. We have all known men in public life almost deserving to be called great, who for want of fibre, fortitude, and sap proved broken reeds in a dark hour—the only real test of a man in earnest. Faint-heartedness Mr. Gladstone called the master vice. It was in the same manful spirit that he once imparted to me a secret of effective speaking: Collect facts and

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figures as accurately and as conclusively as you can, and then drive them home "as if all the world must irresistibly take your own eager interest in them."

In the field of domestic policy the question raised by Trevelyan, of extending household franchise from boroughs to counties, took the first place both in Parliament and out of doors. One of the most interesting of various conferences over which it fell to me, on Chamberlain's initiative, to preside, was a gathering of delegates from the Union of the agricultural labourers. The expenses of the journey were paid either by the delegates themselves or by subscriptions raised in the villages. The object was to support Trevelyan's motion. Unexcited observers were struck, as they were glad to confess, not only by the sound sense and good vernacular of the spokesmen, but by the extraordinary political sobriety of them all. An attempt was made to carry what was then the will-o'-the-wisp of universal suffrage over the head of the proposal for the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer. The delegates were determined to stick to the demand within their reach, not to grasp at what was beyond it, and the amendment was defeated by a great majority. The chairman was said to have touched the heart of the meeting, when he pointed out how monstrous it was that a measure for compelling the children of the agricultural labourers to go to school should be discussed by a Parliament which does not represent the agricultural labourers at all. The fact that it was right in feeling did not prevent this from being a sound political argument. After all, no sound political argument can be wrong in feeling.

By and by in our own party there was a preliminary question on which the division threatened to be sharp: should county franchise precede or follow the reform of London government? It is

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only worth mentioning because it came up, and was settled against the precedence of London reform, at a great meeting of the federation of Liberal associations, held at Leeds (October 1888), over which I was chosen to preside. It was my first test of capacity for handling one of these gatherings, and all went satisfactorily enough. What was more important, it was here that Bright, who had been standard-bearer in the battle for household suffrage in boroughs, made his memorable suggestion for overcoming the Lords, if, as was certain, they should resist the extension of the same franchise in the counties. If the Peers rejected a Bill once, he said in his cogent way, and it had been considered in a subsequent session by the Commons, and if, after due deliberation, it had been again sent up to the Peers, then the Peers must pass it, or it will receive the Royal assent and will become law. The idea had, I think, been broached by James Mill some thirty years before. It took time, as reforms do, but the hour struck. Little did I foresee, as I listened, that some thirty years later it would fall to me to make and carry in the House of Lords the final motion that embodied the spirit of our noble veteran's bold innovation.

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CHAPTER IV

THE CRISIS: PARTING OF FRIENDS

I

As the autumn of 1885 went on I was, among other things, usefully occupied as intermediary between masters and men in a threatened strike at the great Elswick factory on the Tyne. This was extremely instructive in men and affairs, made me no enemies, and cost me no friends. In one or two disputes in the country about the selection of parliamentary candidates, I undertook the thankless task of arbitration. I made speeches at every point of the geographic compass. I need not disinter the mummies of these old discourses, for even heaven-sent manna was not good on the second day. When the election came (1885) I kept my seat at Newcastle, under a peculiar circumstance. We had 7000 plumpers, or single votes, Liberals who would rather throw away one of their two votes than split with Cowen. So that singular genius, though he had fought for good causes in his day, was now constrained to hold one of the two seats by Tory aid, and was finally dislodged from his claim to represent the Liberals of his own city. The election was followed by three months of distracted doubt, confusion, anxiety, for which there is little parallel in our party history.

Chamberlain and I were too busy on the platform to write many letters, and they were

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good-humoured as usual. Here is a scrap from me to him:

November 6, 1885.

Sunderland was a great day. There were over 200 men at the luncheon and 4000 at the meeting, and the cordiality of the welcome almost knocked me over. As I had to listen (on the three occasions) to six speeches of welcome, and six speeches of thanks, I felt at last like the man in *Zadig*. Do you remember? The king to cure him of vanity sent a chorus to sing to him every three minutes:

Que son mérite est extrême!
Que de grâces! que de grandeur!
Ah combien monseigneur
Doit être content de lui-même!

The first day was delightful, the second dubious, the third tiresome, the fourth insupportable, the fifth a torment—and so in like manner the twelfth dose of "the accomplished writer" etc. etc. was as terrible as sugary champagne.

It was the animated era of the Radical programme. The particular articles were less effective in the towns, than some of the novel principles and striking phrases with which they were served up. Religious equality, free schools, free land, and the other items, were intelligible, and in their way exciting, but it was such words as "Ransom," such suggestions as taxation graduated in proportion to the superfluities of the taxpayers, that seized the interest of the public. Land was the question on which Chamberlain impressed with characteristic lucidity his belief that the greatest and most urgent reforms were centred. With a force that no professed Socialist has surpassed, he set forth in concrete shape the claims of the poor on the justice of society. He challenged opponents for alternative suggestions. How did they propose to stop the flow of emigration from the country into the towns? How did they propose to help the poor? That this new political temper in a responsible

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party leader of Cabinet authority should be accepted with silent serenity by Whig colleagues, could not be anticipated. In September (1885) I went from Birmingham to Mentmore, where I found, along with Rosebery the host, Hartington and Harcourt. There was no extremity, though there was no disguise of wonder at Chamberlain's unchastened attempt to force the Whig hand. As we broke up, Hartington took me aside and gave me arguments for inducing my friend at Birmingham to keep the peace. My friend and I soon after dined together at the Athenaeum before going to a great meeting at Victoria Hall, and I faithfully recapitulated over our meal the arguments. They did not prevent a clincher. The meeting over which it was my business to preside was enormous and ardent. Chamberlain defended his proposals, and then told them that of course he could not press them against the majority of the party if the majority should resist, but "it would be dishonourable in him, and lowering the high tone that ought to prevail in public life, if, having committed himself personally to the expediency of these proposals, he should take any place in a government that shut them out of its programme." Though the language of this ultimatum was as correct as it was high, it sounded a note of battle within the party, and rival trumpets rang loud until the days of the poll came. Those days brought immense surprises all round. Neither the personal ascendancy of Mr. Gladstone nor the Radical programme was enough to save us all in the boroughs—a little wearied of the first, and a good deal frightened by the second. Chamberlain was accused of breaking his party, and compared to the man who burned the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Next he earned the homelier style of Jack Cade: when the turn of the counties arrived, the rural voter was found to have rallied to the party who had fought for his new franchise, and

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one at least of whose leaders had bound himself to an agrarian policy of captivating promise. The end of it was in Great Britain a majority of 100 Liberals, right wing and left wing together—333 against 233.

What of Ireland? Not a single Liberal was returned; in the last Parliament she sent 14, but of the 89 contests the Nationalists now won 85, mostly by overwhelming majorities. It was noticed that more than one-fourth of this triumphant band had been locked up in prison under the Coercion Act of 1881. Ulster now sent 18 Nationalists against 17 of the opposite persuasion.

The British public then discovered the disastrous illusions of the last five years. Irish Ministers had appealed with ill-starred confidence from the men below the gangway to their constituents. This was the answer. Efforts were naturally made to give the illusions a longer life by talk of the screw of the priest and the screw of the League. This well-worn chorus could not seriously affect either the moral fact of a hostile national demonstration, or the parliamentary fact that the Irish phalanx of 85 held the balance between the 251 supporters of Lord Salisbury's Government and its 333 opponents. I may well apologise for what I know only too well to be a sadly stale story, but it is of the essence in any political memories of mine, be their interest much or none.

II

I began December by a visit to Chamberlain. After a speech of his at Glasgow in September I had written to him at the end of the month, deprecating his anti-nationalist line:

September 19, 1885.

I cannot bring myself up to your pitch about Ireland. I don't suppose that we differ an atom as to the next step

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to be taken, whatever it may be. But I, for my part, cannot refuse to consider the question of some sort of autonomy. However, the hour for it has not yet come.

At Birmingham we naturally had long close talks about Ireland, both tactics and strategy. Differences between us came into full light as usual. He said to me then, as he wrote to me a day or two later, that our past political intimacy and our position as leaders of the same section made the situation difficult and responsible. If he thought I had not fully considered Irish subjects, he said he should urge me to wait for further discussion. But he knew how much I had thought, read, and written about Ireland, and I might, therefore, consider myself bound to deliver myself, even in opposition to my oldest political friend. In that case we could not help ourselves, and if he might compare Tritons with minnows, it was Fox and Burke over again—his parallel, not mine.

On December 21 I made a speech to my constituents which in effect committed me to some form of Home Rule. People listened respectfully and with close attention, and then, as I noted at the time, went away to think it seriously over. Chamberlain spoke almost immediately after, and I wrote to him:

December 24, 1885.

I did not stay at the hotel at Newcastle, and your telegram was only put into my hands as I was getting into the train for home. Otherwise I would have made a stiff effort [to stop at Birmingham], for the more we meet the better.

I liked your speech. It was the best that you could make under the difficult circumstances in which D——'s rash utterance in one way and ——'s ill-advised in another have placed us all. You put the situation as fairly as possible.

You will, I fear, like my speech less than I liked yours. But it was necessary to my mental peace, and it has been singularly respectfully received, considering the odium that

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attaches to any scent or suspicion of Home Rule. For my sins I got about twenty-five north-country papers on Tuesday and yesterday. They all had articles, and not one (Liberal) found any fault. I have no illusions about it: the bolus will be loathed when the time comes for swallowing it, however moderate it may be.

The Tories will have to go out—isn't that certain? —— came to see me last Saturday. Of course he is not captain of the Irish ship by any means, but, so far as I could gather, the present notion amongst his people is to leave Salisbury in the lurch *at once*. I asked him whether the Tories might not win the Catholic Bishops by hard cash for education; and the Bishops might put the screw on Parnell to keep Salisbury in for a couple of sessions if possible. —— said No! the Parnellites are all thinking of one thing, and one thing only—Home Rule. He says they are arranging to keep their full strength in London all through the session; they will always be there, dinner-hour included. . . .

I met Hutton of *Spectator* in the train last night. He is for *Goschen* as Prime Minister, if Mr. G. cannot make a government!

Chamberlain replied with a longish letter of reasoned dissent from my performance, beginning very plainly:

I do not blame you for holding your opinions. Possibly you are right and I am wrong. I do not blame you for expressing them on critical occasions, and should not respect you if you did not give effect to your conscientious convictions. But do not let us attempt to blind ourselves to the fact that on the most important issue which has arisen since you were in parliament, we are working against each other and not as allies.

With the least possible desire to get into the region of rebutter and rejoinder, I ended the year with the most seasonable apologia that I could think of:

J. M. to J. C.

December 28, 1885.

As to my speech, I certainly do not complain of you for stating your mind frankly.

On the drift and substance of the speech I only make this remark, that it goes a very little way indeed beyond

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your own passage on Ireland in your speech of December 17, and that it lays down not one proposition which is not necessary to make a case for your own project of a National Council. As for the opportuneness of my deliverance, I did not see why the public or the party should suppose that we all agree with Hartington and Goschen, and all disagree with Mr. Gladstone about Ireland. Many of us don't, and then was the time for somebody to say so.

The more interesting question, however, is not whether I was right or wrong, but whether I was so violently and outrageously wrong as to justify you in announcing to me the end of our political connection, and your intention of proclaiming the fact on some convenient occasion to the public. I remember that you said something of the same kind because I voted against the Government once on the Soudan business. I did not think it wise then, and I don't think it wise to-day, that you should bring the thunders of excommunication into play whenever we do not take precisely the same view of things. Ah, but, you say, you have "felt for a long time" that we have been "drifting apart." This amazes me. I should have thought that we had never worked together more cordially than during the last four months. And indeed it is not more than three or four weeks since you wrote to me in very kind and handsome terms, expressive of your sense of the way in which I had stuck to you. Frankly, then, I cannot conceive what you mean.

Excommunication won't be the death of me—but it will certainly destroy much of the relish of public life for me. On the other hand, I am equally sure that when your own day arrives, much of its satisfaction will be lost if you have let go one of your best allies on the road. I submit that you should not be in such a hurry to sever old political connections. As you know, I have no sort of ambition to be an admiral of the fleet. But I'll be hanged if I'll be powder-monkey. I have thought, read, written about Ireland all my life. Here comes a crisis. Am I to be debarred from saying what I think—saying it, mind you, as I did at Newcastle, in particularly careful, sober, well-weighed words? Are the Tories and the Whigs to say what they like, and I to stand by in silent acquiescence? Well, I won't. Don't be too exacting. We may part company over Irish affairs before they are done. The journey will be trying. But it's childish for men like you and me to quarrel at the first jolt.

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We need not say any more, need we? When I read in the newspapers your threatened advertisement that you will "no longer be responsible for my debts," it will be time enough for me to consider.

Meanwhile, I have had a capital lunch on the admirable caucus oyster [he had made us a present of a Christmas barrel for several years]. I am full of hearty good feeling and good wishes for you and your youngsters—and I will not at once let go the hope that the future of our friendship may be of a piece with the past.

Then:

J. M. to J. C. (private)

January 1, 1886.

I have been tardy in answering your letter, because, besides the approaching disintegration of the Empire, I am much beset by the disintegration of my present home. We have to migrate, and I am worried out of my life by house-hunting.

You are wrong in supposing that I was offended. If I seemed vehement, it was from my desire to vindicate myself from the imputation of being disloyal, *frondeur*, *mauvais coucheur*, or anything else that would justify a severance of our public friendship. If we differ vitally on a vital question, then of course the severance must come. My complaint was that you were rather in a hurry to assume that our difference is irreconcilable. I certainly do not mean that you are in a hurry to throw me over. On the contrary, nobody could have been more zealous and untiring in encouraging me, in pressing me forward, and in urging me on to take a prominent part. Pray believe, once for all, that I appreciate to the very full your thoroughly stout and generous backing, or rather dragging. Tacitus says something about his dignity being started by one Emperor, increased by a second, and carried still further by a third. It is always a delight to me to think that "dignitas mea," whatever it may amount to, has been "inchoata, aucta, et longius provecta" not by three men but by one, and that one yourself.

I said that I went a very little way beyond your National Council, because I cannot believe for an instant that the National Council would remain content with functions so narrow.

I send you an article (which please to return as soon as

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you can) on your scheme. It is written by a man who was for several years Lord Spencer's private secretary at Dublin, and who is said to be very competent.

Well might you say that —— is "a cake that is not turned."

I have some ideas, but they will keep until we meet.

I am for no plan of Thorough, unless it involves the disappearance of the Irish members from our House. If that be not possible, I would almost try to muddle and potter on. But why is it not possible? A book worth your reading in is Todd's *Parly. Government in the British Colonies*, published by Longman in 1880.

Friendship is too often not much more than a habit. With Chamberlain it went far beyond a habit. The friend was not merely a comrade in a campaign; he was an innermost element in his own existence. To keep a friend, to stand by him, to put a good construction on whatever he said or did, to make a ready sacrifice for a friend, came as naturally to him as traits of self-love come to men in general. This was, of course, bound up with expectations to match. If he stood by his friend, he counted on a friend to stand by him. He was in a sense exacting, but only as a general in the field has good right to be exacting. Let us be careful to have no cheap cynicism about such things. He was born a combatant. It is pure unreason to reckon on combatants being ready, like Diomede and Glaucus, for the sake of old associations to throw down their arms.

The maelstrom was now in sight, its uproar in full sound. There is an entry or two for January:

From Diary. *Jan.* 5. — Dined with Chamberlain at the Athenaeum, and then to see French play. Very agreeable evening, with much frank but perfectly pleasant talk.

Jan. 7.—To Chelmsford. Great gathering, and warm reception. Shot my bolt for removal of Irish members from Westminster. Could get no train up to London: accident on the line: fog: altogether

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a very dree experience. Slept all night on a sofa in a sitting-room at the hotel: good fire: might have been worse.

Jan. 8.—Went to see Stead in his prison at Holloway for the last time. He was in a strangely exalted mood. "As I was taking my exercise this morning in the prison yard," he said, "I asked myself who was the man of most importance now alive. I could only find one answer—*the prisoner in this cell.*"

Jan. 13.—Dined at Chamberlain's. Only Collings there. Then to French play with Chamberlain. Earnest talk with C. as to our relations: painful indeed, but made easier by simple honesty and sincerity of desire in both of us to preserve good feeling. Play amusing. Shook hands with Hartington as we came out.

Friday, Jan. 29, 1886.—Dined at Chamberlain's. Nobody there but Gray, M.P. for Dublin, and owner of the *Freeman's Journal.* Talked Ireland all night. Gray thought Home Rule might die down, if land question were settled. Chamberlain curiously narrow about Ireland, unless my notions of Irish history, Irish character, and the Irish case, both social and parliamentary, are all wrong. After I was gone, Gray told C. he thought his people would be content with land *plus* Local Government. Well, I don't believe it; no more does Gray. Chamberlain's own line was to go great lengths towards settling land, and giving as much self-government as he could on local lines.

The ministerial end now rapidly arrived. I have already elsewhere told the story of the resort to Coercion after the election by the Salisbury Cabinet, who had dropped it before the election. I must add to that story from secret material since made public that the Cabinet was divided, that two of its leading members believed it impossible to sustain a case for Coercion, and that it was not

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justified by "the weight of facts adduced," that the newly appointed Irish Minister, W. H. Smith, protested from Dublin Castle against being hurried to a decision. One of the ablest and most respected Ministers protested against being governed in a matter so grave "by the ignorant wish" of the great majority of the party, or "being forced to action we do not approve for fear of being branded as the timid party." It is an instructive episode. The whole transaction sadly exposed two things: one, the levity with which our Government drops or picks up constitutional securities in Ireland; the other, the error of supposing that the conservative conscience is a surer guarantee to the country for calm, deliberate, just, public-spirited judgment than the conscience of wild-cat democrats.

The morning after the Salisbury Government was defeated in the House of Commons, I happened to overtake Randolph Churchill in St. James's Park, coming away from their last Cabinet. He stopped me, and we walked together to the door of the Reform Club. "You look a little pensive," I said. "Yes," he replied, "I was thinking—I have plenty to think of. Well, we're out—you're in." "Yes, we're in for three months: then we dissolve and you're in for six years." "Not at all sure. Let me tell you one thing: the Conservative party are not going to be made the instrument of the Irish for turning out Gladstone," etc., etc.

Jan. 30.—Went over to Chamberlain at noon. Long talk over the news that the Queen had sent for Mr. Gladstone. Nothing could have been more truly sociable. C. said it was of all things most certain that G. would offer me the Cabinet. If I went in without him, it would be political ruin to one of us, and he thought it would be I who should be smashed, though of course in some circumstances it might seem to be my duty to support Mr. G. I said that on the whole I agreed.

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The ministry would be short and not glorious. I should certainly not take office out of the Cabinet. If I were in and he out, it might very possibly indeed be my political destruction. If there was to be a Hartington policy towards Ireland, I would not join anyhow, but, on the other hand, if Mr. G. was for going forward in the sense of my two speeches at Newcastle and Chelmsford, then I did not see how I could honourably refuse, whatever the cost either to private comfort or future prospects. To all this he did not demur, neither did he assent. He did not think he should join, if Granville goes to F.O., for Bismarck hates him, and would begin again to make trouble for us, as before. C. would make his [English] land question a *sine qua non*. Would not join if Gladstone has any Home Rule scheme, but no objection to leave it an open question to be settled in the Cabinet afterwards. Would not consent to Coercion anyhow. I said the same as to that. He was perfectly straightforward and satisfactory in tone, disclaimed any affection or duty to Mr. G. Piqued at not being consulted, I thought. Nor was such discontent unreasonable, though on the other hand it was not unreasonable that Mr. Gladstone should hesitate to take into intimate counsel a colleague who had already started on his own account a meteoric campaign for ransom and other radical extremities.

In the violent and protracted heats that followed, unconsidered things were said by myself among others as to all this. It was always easy to catch at an inconsistency in propositions; but at the core was his belief that the future of the country, to which his attachment was a thousand times more than a mere piece of common form, was bound up with the preservation of an Irish Union. He satisfied himself that Mr. Gladstone's line of approach was fatal, and could not believe that it was the result of free conviction. In this way each

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side ignores the strength and sincerity of the other; that is the common law of serious controversy, and harsh imputations and misjudgments were balanced. It is not by such things as these that supreme issues are decided.

III

Sunday, Jan. 31.—Was writing an article peaceably at home until one o'clock, when telegram arrived from Mr. G. asking me to call on him at Carlton House Terrace at two. I got there to the moment, and found him at his writing-table, with no sign of fuss or hurry. He had to make to me, he said, an important proposition, and it was that I should accept the office of Irish Secretary. Nothing could have taken me more by surprise, after my two speeches at Newcastle and Chelmsford. I asked what was to be the Irish policy, or at least the base of it. He drew a paper from a drawer and read it to me. I took it, behind all the words about future examination and so forth, to point pretty definitely to Home Rule in some shape or other, but I told him that before accepting I should like to have some talk with Chamberlain, with whom I had worked on very close and intimate terms for many years. He seemed a little taken aback at the delay, but could not refuse. I asked only a couple of hours to consider. Our conversation had lasted little more than twenty minutes. I drove off to Chamberlain's, found he had gone to lunch at Mrs. J—— and followed him there. Luncheon was over, and he came down from the drawing-room to find me among the *beaux restes* in the dining-room. I told him what had passed. For an instant he changed colour, and no wonder. My going to Ireland was the sudden arrival of long-apprehended peril to a cherished private intimacy, and of mischief to the commonwealth. "Well," he said, "it is just what I expected. I thought

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that was what he would do. I suppose you have accepted."

J. M. "No, I have not. It is no trifle for a man who has never been in office and who has been less than three years in the House of Commons. And if the Cabinet should in the end decide on a narrow Irish policy, I should be left isolated in the lurch, if that matters. I told Mr. G. I should not decide without seeing you."

J. C. "I don't see how you could keep your self-respect if you were to refuse."

His look was sombre, and he went on as before in stiff murmurs against Mr. Gladstone. It took some quarter of an hour. In a pretty tense frame of mind, I walked slowly down to the Athenaeum, had some tea, finished my article, noted down seven separate strong reasons against my fitness for the Irish Office, and then went across to Mr. Gladstone. I steadily recited my seven objections. He swept them aside wholesale, made me a cordial speech about confidence in my loyalty, and evidently means me for a special ally. It must be the critical post. I knew too well the responsibility of the step I had taken, to have room for a spark of elation. Mechanically I dressed for dinner, and mechanically drove to Chamberlain's large party. My thoughts seemed quite collected again after the shock of the last seven or eight hours. Another guest remarked that our host's temper was rather indifferent. To me he was not at all ungenial. I agreed to go and see him next day.

February 1.—Called on Harcourt: he received me most kindly and nothing could have been pleasanter than his talk. His own course still unsettled. Then to Chamberlain; an hour of important argumentation, opening no new ground, but travelling over old ground in a half-bewildering change of light and aspect: is anxious for continued alliance: thinks it could be done.

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February 6. — To Osborne to be sworn in. Spencer, Rosebery, Harcourt, Childers, Herschell, Aberdeen. Herschell said that he was the same age as Cairns when Cairns got the Great Seal. A fine, bright day, and plenty of agreeable chat all the way. Saw the steamer carrying off the outgoing Ministers. Recalled Emerson's saying that every ship looks romantic except the ship we are in. For once I thought Emerson mistaken. After luncheon, the Council. The Queen wore a moody and, if I must confess, not an attractive look. I kissed hands; Aberdeen, as Lord-Lieutenant, signed my appointment to be Chief Secretary; consequent vacancy at Newcastle. Telegraphed instanter to our whip, who thereupon moved the writ. Back at Victoria by seven and dined at Ripon's. Donald Stewart, hero of many a famous Indian expedition, Browning, Henry James of Hereford, Brett there. Felt at the day's end as if I had been suddenly transported into a singularly new sphere of being. This did not save me now and many another time from deep touches of nostalgic regrets for the confidence and company of those who had been my lifelong comrades in arms. For some days after my acceptance of office I nursed the idea that I might be useful as a buffer between Chamberlain and the Prime Minister. I ought to have known better. A few days were enough to dispel the illusion. No individual was to blame. The governing forces of the situation were intractable.

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CHAPTER V

DRAMATIC PERIOD

As I think most things are governed by destiny, having done all that is possible, I submit with patience.—MARLBOROUGH.

A MEMORABLE period in our history now followed, extending over seven years. The theatre was small in its proportions, but keen audiences watched it all over the English-speaking world. Scenes were constantly shifted; the main course of action was diversified by exciting underplots. The sanctity of law was violently strained, so was the fundamental machinery of parliament. One of the two governing parties of the realm was broken. Religion and race, the two incendiary forces of history, shot jets of flame from their undying embers. Surprises came, sudden turns, and situations of mounting suspense, such as make the fortune of a stage play. The strange motives and humours of men, aristocrat and democrat, patrician and plebeian, showed in full force. Passion at least once rose to tragic height. Squalid interludes, to be sure, there were, and scenes of Clowns: they only helped, as our Elizabethans knew, to make things the more dramatic. Even strong minds wavered with the ebb and flow of events, but the three or four men on either side, to whom a master part had fallen, played it with steadfast and unfaltering courage. When the curtain at last fell on the fifth act of the First Part, the two who first inspired and mounted it, had gone. The true climax came later.

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I

The fortunes of the Government of 1886 are now an old story, and I have already tried elsewhere to tell it. Before it had been many weeks in existence, two of its members resigned. Chamberlain always said that he entered the Cabinet room on the fatal day with the firm hope that he might be able to remain. Bright had first shown me this room at my request as an inquisitive outsider some years before. More crimes and blunders, said he, had been committed within its four walls than in any other place in the island. At any rate, that day's proceedings must be added to the ill-omened list.

Acton, a particularly well-informed critic, wrote to a friend, after the withdrawal of Chamberlain and Trevelyan: "I did not think very well of the new Government, and I like it less now. . . . Few have that sort of information to which no problem seems new. . . . Bryce is not enough to the front in this instance. So that Morley's importance is excessive." Why was this? Only because the person last named was thorough, had a firmer record on the policy; had a watchful eye on men tempted to be backsliders; was good friends with the Irishmen, and stood for them in the Cabinet. The secret was quite simple. In moments like this it is the men who know their own mind that are important even to excess. Let me add a most necessary word. Of course all this of my part was as dust in the balance compared with the moral authority of Lord Spencer. It was the repudiation of Lord Spencer when the Tories came into power in the summer of 1885, after his strenuous battle for what was called law and order, and the substitution for his policy of well-known attempts made by his Unionist successor to come to terms with Parnell, that convinced him of the loss of his

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battle. The shock of Spencer's conversion was severe, both social and political. That the famous Master of the Pytchley Hounds should have turned Parnellite, was an uncalculated eclipse of the sun to the important classes who knew more of horses and dogs than they knew of Irish tenants. The cardinal fact remained, like the other fact that Lord Carnarvon had been closeted with Mr. Parnell, or the fact that Harcourt, the most experienced of Liberal statesmen after Mr. Gladstone, who in December had used words of unlucky scorn in taunts about stewing in Parnellite juice, had in February gone into a Cabinet dependent on a supply of that very juice. Lord Spencer's case was different. His conversion gave driving point to general arguments for Home Rule. Without his earnest adhesion to the revolutionary change in the principles of Irish government, the attempt would have been useless from the first, and nobody was more alive to this than Mr. Gladstone himself, both now and afterwards.

I first made Spencer's acquaintance in 1882, when I called at the Viceregal Lodge, and we exchanged the standard arguments about Coercion, without change in our respective conclusions—he for it, and I against. Walking away from our interview into the Phoenix Park I came upon Mr. Healy. He asked me how on earth I, of all people, came to be in that den of iniquity. In extenuating tones I replied, "I have never been here before, and I don't suppose I shall ever come here again." Within three or four short years the stars had made me working commander at Dublin Castle.

When the new policy was launched, Spencer and I at once became sworn allies, and so we remained in unbroken confederacy until the fatal breakdown of his health in the autumn of 1905. In intellectual calibre he was not, and did not claim to be, of the first order, any more for that matter than was

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either of his two family forebears—Spencer the famous organiser of naval victory in Pitt's time, and Althorp, one of the heroes of parliamentary reform. Yet both of them were conspicuous for their excellence in the ranks of public service.

Spencer was not in his heart at all indifferent to either popularity or power; few men who have had popularity and power within their reach can be, or have any right to be, indifferent. But no man of high social station or low was ever more disinterested, more unselfish, more free from the defects incident to either patrician pride or plebeian vanity. He was of too lofty a nature to have a trace of the covetousness of place that disfigured the patrician Whig caste even down to such days as these. He had a slow mind and was an awkward speaker; in fact, he could not speak. But he always took sound practical points in deliberation, could weigh the force of an argument even if he bethought him of a decisive answer to it, and he could be a useful critic of the clauses of a Bill. Indefatigable in attention to administrative business in many important offices, he sought the best practical advisers he could find, and listened to them, only too readily, as some thought on one memorable occasion at least, when a fatal breach of opinion on naval strength separated him from Mr. Gladstone. For a slow mind, in union with high character and some fixity of will, may make a mixture embarrassing to colleagues. Of no leading man of that time could it be more truly said that he was the soul of honour; or that the instinct of devotion to public duty was in his inmost fibre. A character like this, united to consummate experience of Irish government in two epochs, gave Lord Spencer an influence over Liberal opinion without which Mr. Gladstone himself could hardly have gone on.

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II

In respect of the two Bills, Home Rule and Land, my own share mainly lay in keeping us in accurate and faithful communication with Parnell, and next in my firm adhesion to Lord Spencer's view of the necessity of accompanying Home Rule by a Land Bill. For active attention to Irish administration there was no time and no particular demand, and we were lucky in finding as its permanent head in Dublin Castle, Sir Robert Hamilton, a man of experience and ability, and in firm sympathy with the new policy, of which in truth he had learned the lesson during the viceroyalty of Lord Carnarvon. I was glad to hear that he said of me that I soon found my official feet, and kept a head clear and free from fuss. Bright, the first time he met me in the lobby, said, "Do you know what I say about you?" *J. M.* "What do you say?" *B.* "I keep wondering whether it is courage or folly in you." I wondered pleasantly in reply whether the question was in him good nature or good manners. Huxley, who had his own quarrels with Mr. Gladstone about Gadarene swine and other critical affairs, said to me, "Ah, he is sending you, my dear friend, to Ireland, as he sent Gordon to Khartoum. I advise you to look out for yourself; that's all."

In one quarter a hurricane burst upon Irish Government which made my name a word of singular abhorrence in one portion of Ireland. Belfast is one of the triumphs of modern trade. The shipyards turn out mighty vessels that rival the noblest constructions of the Mersey or the Clyde. The linen factories employ great hosts of skilful workers. Its inhabitants boast of the number of new houses that are built every year; of the enormous sums that are annually collected by the officers of the revenue; of the fact that the

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duties of customs paid at Belfast exceed those of any port in the United Kingdom excepting London and Liverpool. Yet, strange to say, this great and flourishing community where energy, intelligence, and enterprise have achieved results so striking, has proved to harbour a spirit of bigotry and violence for which a parallel can hardly be found in any town in western Europe. The outbreaks of disorder in 1857, in 1864, in 1872 were as formidable as any that have taken place in these kingdoms even in the most agitated times of the nineteenth century. There is no such anachronism in our day as the circumstances that make the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne and the feast of the Assumption days always of anxiety, and often of terror, in one of the most industrious and thriving societies in the realm. Even harmless school excursions of little children on a summer afternoon are turned into occasions of uproar and aggression. "The very name of Orangemen," said Archbishop Whately, the last of all men to be a friend of the Pope, "is a sign chosen on purpose to keep up the memory of a civil war which every friend of humanity would wish to bury in oblivion. It is doing what among the heathen was reckoned an accursed thing—keeping a trophy in repair." The general election of 1885, the accession of a Liberal Government, the suspense about the Bill, the evident approach of another election, slowly prepared Belfast for one of its moods of fever. Incitements from statesmen and sectaries in England sent up the temperature. A trivial quarrel between a Protestant and a Catholic workman (June 8) fell like a spark into a barrel of powder. For nearly four months, with intermittent periods, the town was convulsed by furious and sanguinary riots. They had one new peculiarity. Vindictive lawlessness this time was animated less by the consecrated hatreds of sect than by incensed feeling

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among a large section of the Protestants of Belfast against the police. The bad language of Nationalists against constables on eviction duty in the south and west was capped by the bad language of loyalists as constables strove to stop the looting of whisky-shops and the stoning of factory girls. A strange story was put about and spread like wildfire. Nothing could persuade the people, who habitually claim to be the most intelligent persons in all Ireland, that extra police had not been specially imported into the town by the new Irish Secretary, with express orders to shoot down the Protestants.[1] Even magistrates and other citizens of responsibility and repute credited the crazy alliteration of "Morley's Murderers." In vain were they reminded that the satanic Secretary must have had for active confederates in his Bartholomew plot a lord-lieutenant, an under-secretary, an inspector-general, and most of the officers in command of constabulary squads—all of them Protestants of declared and undeniable orthodoxy. When James II. was at Dublin Castle on the eve of the Boyne, Avaux, the French ambassador at his side, urged him to do something of this sort. James indignantly refused, and Louis XIV. rebuked his agent for the barbarous suggestion. Yet sensible men in Belfast seriously thought that what was too bad for a couple of persecuting despots towards the close of the seventeenth century, was good enough for a Benthamite Liberal towards the close of the nineteenth.

Some thirty lives at least were lost. The bulk of the people were doubtless eager in their desire to aid the authorities in keeping the peace, and the clergy especially, both Catholic and Protestant, often at their own extreme peril, with stones and bullets flying, made resolute efforts to quell the flood of senseless passion and to part the frantic

[1] *Report of the Belfast Riots Commission* (1887), pp. 16-17.

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crowds. Some of these divines indeed were only undoing their own handiwork. Their inflammatory theologies might well be held responsible for the slender hold of tolerance, charity, brotherly kindness and goodwill upon the hearts and practice of too many of their flocks. By an extraordinary piece of Irish paradox, the riots became most violent long after the fate of the hated Bill had been sealed and its authors cashiered.

III

Every one knows how the Bill was rejected in the House of Commons, how the result of a general election ratified the verdict of the ninety-three Liberals who voted against the Bill, and how Lord Salisbury made a Government which held the ground for five difficult years.

A new and striking event was the accession of Mr. Balfour, until then an unmarked personality in public life, to the Irish Office in the spring of 1887. He had begun to show himself a new and competent hand in philosophical criticism and telling expression some ten years before, in a short piece printed in the *Fortnightly* under my editorial auspices, the first rudimentary version of a vein of speculative reaction against the prevailing negativism. It was a natural pleasure to an editor to welcome fresh intellectual and literary force, in a letter which the contributor declared to be the most encouraging that he had ever had. The hazards of an Irish Minister made of him a new captain in the strength and nerve of man of action, and here, though I could not applaud, I soon had good reason to appreciate. In Parliament he was confronted by Mr Gladstone, and Mr. Parnell and his expert and powerful lieutenants. In Ireland he faced passionate political disappointment, and what was more troublesome, the persistent scuffles

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of angry agrarian disorder. On the other hand, he had fervent at his back the same great majority in this island that had routed our Bill in 1886. The Unionists now exulted in the advance to the front of the scene of a champion who proved to be a persevering and dexterous debater, and to have both the moral courage due to perfect comprehension of his own case and unfaltering conviction of its wisdom, and the parliamentary courage of fearing no opponent and no awkward or embarrassing event. In spite of all our experience, he handled the old sophisms of Irish coercion with a dauntless ingenuity that would have made a piquant diversion, if only the public difficulties had been less flagrant, and if we had failed to realise that behind his talent there lay what in politics goes much further than talent, personality and character. He never flagged, and he even succeeded in diffusing a sort of charm over such topics as the squalid episodes of prison treatment and police excess of force. Debate on Irish contentions to the two formidable lieutenants, Harcourt and Goschen, on the two front benches, was of the nature of lusty cudgel-play or the conflict of football teams. Balfour's favourite weapon was the rapier, with no button on, without prejudice to a strong broadsword when it was wanted—and for fine point and edge his nearest rival was Sexton on the Irish benches. For so fine a performance—and it was one of his finest—as Mr. Gladstone's (March 8, 1890) when he swept away the ragged, dingy tapestries of the Parnell Commission the Irish Secretary could never be a match. His eye for the construction of dilemmas was incomparable, and the adversary was rapidly transfixed by the necessity of extricating himself from two equally discreditable scrapes. To expose a single inch of unguarded surface was to provoke a dose of polished raillery that was new, effective, and unpleasant. He revelled in carrying logic all its length, and was

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not always above urging a weak point as if it were a strong one. Though polished and high-bred in air, he unceremoniously applied Dr. Johnson's cogent principle that to treat your adversary with respect is to give him an advantage to which he is not entitled. Of intellectual satire he was a master —when he took the trouble; for the moral irony that leaves a wound he happily had no taste, any more than he had a taste for that extremity in temper and language which was rather the fashion of leading men at the time. I still can find no better parallel to him than Macaulay's account of Halifax: "His understanding was keen, sceptical, inexhaustibly fertile in distinctions and objections, his taste refined, his sense of the ludicrous exquisite, his temper placid and forgiving, but fastidious, and by no means prone either to malevolence or to enthusiastic admiration." When in the fulness of time I followed him as Irish Minister, there was a meeting of the Congested Districts Board in the Irish Office, the shabby tenement that I have heard compared with more than mere jesting intention to the office of a money-lending attorney. Balfour, who had wisely instituted this Board, was present there. He struck me by his firm close business tone. Every word showed a hard grip of the matter in hand. Full of charm and play in ordinary converse, in business he is absolutely without atmosphere, just as Chamberlain was. We stuck to it until past two, and then he and I walked amicably away together to the House of Commons. "Ah," he said, laughing, as we banged the door of the old Irish Office behind us, "what hours I've had in this dingy place." As we trod the *via dolorosa* together he told me that he never slept well after a rough night in the House of Commons. "I never lose my temper, but one's nerves get on edge, and it takes time to cool." He made an interesting and a true remark about the curious

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inability of the permanent officials, the business of whose lives is to think about what will and what won't suit Parliament, to understand Parliament.

J. M. "I am not sure they are not right in trusting to their Chief for that. What is more and more clear to me is that you cannot know the House of Commons to good effect unless you are actually in it and at work. The detached man is no use."

B. "Yes, and the curious thing is that men who have been in the House of Commons, when they go into the House of Lords, seem quite to forget the temper and the ways of the House of Commons. . . . I wonder if you are like me: when I'm at work on politics, I long to be in literature, and *vice versa*."

J. M. "I should think so, indeed. That is the bane of my life. You remember Pascal: 'To dwell on the evils of the present pursuit and think only of the good of things absent, that is what produces inconstancy.' Yet I don't know that either you or I are particularly inconstant."

It was not surprising that, in Burke's famous language about Charles Townshend, he became the delight and ornament of his party in the country, and the charm of every private society which he honoured with his presence, and clouds of incense daily rose about him from the prodigal superstition of innumerable admirers. But, like the more disastrous case of Townshend, Mr. Balfour failed to heal the national wound. Its nature had been explained by Lord Salisbury. For many generations Ireland had been governed through the landed gentry. That system both English parties were now for dislodging, Liberals by tenure acts, and Conservatives, along with Bright, by purchase. Mr. Balfour's party was barren of institutions by which the country could be governed for the future. To this part of the problem he declined to offer a contribution, content to rest upon Swift's

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undeniable fundamental, that eleven men fully armed are a match for one man in his shirt.

Another piquant change was the appearance of Hartington and Chamberlain at the end of the front Opposition bench, separated by me from the great heresiarch who had for so many years been their leader. Our mutual asides in the course of debates and incidents were entirely frank, but they had little significance then, and now they have none. The first of them was a surprise to the House. He intervened frequently, and whenever he intervened he spoke with unexpected force, weight, gravity, and temper, that fortified any of our enemies that needed it, and impressed or shook any of our friends with an inclination to backsliding.

IV

Lord Acton.

It was about this time, and partly owing to my prominent association for the moment with a country predominantly Catholic, that I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with Lord Acton. Friendship is a relation that has many types. On none did I presume to set a more special value than on my intercourse with this observant, powerful, reflective, marvellously full mind. He saw both past history as a whole and modern politics as a whole. He was a profound master of all the lights and shades of ecclesiastical system; a passionately interested master of the bonds between moral truth and the action of political system; an eager explorer of the ideas that help to govern the rise and fall of States; and a scrupulous student of the march of fact, circumstance, and personality in which such ideas worked themselves through. He was comprehensive as an encyclopaedia, but profound and rich, not tabulated and dry. He was a man who even on one's busiest day could seldom come amiss, so deep and unexpected was

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he in thought, so impressive without empty pomp of words, so copious, exact, and ready in his knowledge. Once, after a great political gathering in a country town, owing to some accident of missing carriages, he and I had to walk home three or four miles along a moonlit road. I mentioned that I had engaged to make a discourse at Edinburgh on Aphorisms. This fired him, and I was speedily and most joyfully on the scent of a whole band of German, French, Italian, and Spanish names ample enough to carry me through half a score discourses. I never had a shorter walk. He was fond of society, but had a talent for silence that was sometimes provoking. You tempted a friend to meet him at table, and raised one hopeful topic after another; but the oracle proved dumb, and devoted himself steadily to a mute journey through the courses. He was not without some intellectual difficulties for us to reconcile. The union of devoted faith in liberty with devoted adherence to the Church of authority was a standing riddle. His conception of history as a business of wide general forces did not easily fit in with his untiring hunt for incidents on the political backstairs, as the historian's most precious and decisive prizes. He was sometimes fatally addicted to the oblique and the allusive, as if he might enjoy playing hide-and-seek with the well-meaning reader. He winds up his weighty—almost too weighty—introduction to Machiavelli's *Prince* with the remark that the nineteenth century had seen the course of its history twenty-five times diverted by actual or attempted crime. I often challenged him for the precise list of this tremendous Newgate Calendar; I could never induce him to disclose more than a dozen.

By the signal regard of Mr. Carnegie, Acton's library passed into my hands (1902). In proposing the gift of it to the University of Cambridge, I

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wrote to the Duke of Devonshire as its Chancellor in terms about the creator of the library that I believed to be adequate to the occasion and true to the man. Here are some of the operative words:

"For some time I played with the fancy of retaining it for my own use and delectation. But I am not covetous of splendid possessions; life is very short; and such a collection is fitter for a public and undying institution than for any private mortal. After due inquiry and deliberation I have decided respectfully to ask the University of Cambridge, in which you hold the high office of Chancellor, to do me the favour of accepting this gift.

"The library has none of the treasures that are the glory of your Chatsworth. Nor is it one of those noble and miscellaneous accumulations that have been gathered by the chances of time and taste in colleges and other places of old foundation. It was collected by Lord Acton to be the material for a history of Liberty, the emancipation of Conscience from Power, and the gradual substitution of Freedom for Force in the government of men. That guiding object gives to these sixty or seventy thousand volumes a unity that I would fain preserve by placing them where they can be kept intact and in some degree apart. . . .

"In this way, I believe, Cambridge will have the most appropriate monument of a man whom, though she thrice refused him as a learner, she afterwards welcomed as a teacher—one of the most remarkable men of our time, extraordinary in his acquisitions, extraordinary in the depth and compass of his mind. The books will, in the opinion of scholars more competent to judge than I, be a valuable instrument of knowledge; but that is hardly all. The very sight of this vast and ordered array in all departments, tongues, and times, of the history of civilised governments, the growth

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of faiths and institutions, the fluctuating movements of human thought, all the struggles of churches and creeds, the diverse types of great civil and ecclesiastical governors, the diverse ideals of States—all this will be to the ardent scholar a powerful stimulus to thought. And it was Acton himself who said that the gifts of historical thinking are better than historical learning. His books are sure to inspire both, for, multitudinous though they be, they concentrate the cardinal problems of modern history."

Acton once deemed it worth while to say of me that I saw nothing in politics but higher expediency, no large principles. "As there are for him," he wrote of me to a common friend, "no rights of God, there are no rights of man—the consequence on earth of obligation in Heaven. Therefore he never tries to adjust his view to many conditions and times and circumstances, but approaches each with a mind uncommitted to devotion and untrammelled by analogies. . . . The consequence of this propensity of mind is that he draws his conclusions from much too narrow an induction; and that his very wide culture—wide at least for a man to whom all the problems, the ideas, the literature of religion are indifferent and unknown—does not go to the making of his policy. These are large drawbacks, leaving, nevertheless, a mind of singular elasticity, veracity, and power, capable of all but the highest things. He seems to me to judge men dispassionately." [1]

Is it ungracious to offer a single word on an appreciation so truly generous? As for wide culture not going to the making of our Irish policy, as for working from too narrow an induction, does it not seem, if I may take high instances, that on the whole men have done best, like Somers, Chatham, Walpole, Peel, who concentrated mind and

[1] *Letters to Mary Drew*, pp. 179-81.

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energy upon the circle of facts by which they were actually confronted and summoned? Then somebody said of Hallam that he was the magistrate of history. In a far deeper sense it was true of Acton. The imputation of indifference about the ideas and literature of religion rather startled me. The charge, too, that I saw nothing in politics but the higher expediency needed some qualification. I had only adopted from Burke the doctrine of plain common sense, that the man who meddles with action must consider consequence, balance probabilities, estimate forces, choose the lesser evil, courageously acquiescing in the fact that things in politics are apt to turn out second best.

Well, however, may I be content to let this pass. Our common relation with Mr. Gladstone gave me the privilege of much free contact with Acton, and his kindness to me was unwearied. I shall not forget the feeling—as on the breaking forth of some unexpected vision of the sea—with which I was taken from an upper gallery and looked upon the noble hall that contained his books, now mine, and beheld the seat and table where he had so sedulously read and ruminated and made his diligent sheaves of transcript from the silent masters round him. A historical student of remarkable power and knowledge has told us how different was his impression; how, going down from Oxford to Shropshire, he beheld the most pathetic sight of wasted labour that ever met human eyes, the most impressive of all testimony to the vanity of human life: "There were shelves on shelves on every conceivable subject—Renaissance sorcery—the Fueros of Aragon—Scholastic Philosophy—the growth of the French Navy—American exploration—Church Councils—and many books were full of hundreds of cross-references in pencil, noting passages as bearing on some particular development or evolution in modern life or thought.

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There were pigeon-holed cabinets with literally thousands of compartments, into each of which were sorted scores of little white papers with references to some particular topic. . . . It is better to have produced one solid monograph on the minutest point—better to have edited a single pipe-roll or annotated a single short chronicle—than to have accumulated for forty years unwritten learning that goes down to the grave and is lost." It is indeed too true that "no man of first-rate powers has in our time left so little by which posterity may judge those powers." Yet if I may for an instant associate myself with posterity, I undertake, in the four volumes of lectures and essays collected by the pious zeal of his Cambridge pupils, to find at the very least one pregnant, pithy, luminous, suggestive saying in any three of their pages. As I turn them over, I am dead against the pipe-roll.

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CHAPTER VI

THE IRISH LEADER

Friendship and association are very fine things, and a grand phalanx of the best of the human race, banded for some catholic object. Yes, excellent—but remember that no society can ever be so large as one man.—EMERSON.

ONE evening, dining in company with Mr. Gladstone, he said to me across the table, "You and I have had better opportunity of knowing Parnell than any two men in England." Somebody suggested the two leading lawyers who were his counsel. "No," said Gladstone, "we two have seen him at political work. And I say that he is a political genius—a genius—a genius of most uncommon order."

During the four years from 1886 to 1890 it was my business to keep in close relations with this potent figure. The pen of Tacitus or Sallust or de Retz would be needed to do full justice to a character so remarkable. It is some consolation for the absence of one of these great masters to bear in mind that he is already well known from the blaze of light that the singular emergencies of his life threw over him; and also from the plain truth that his traits were salient, not subtle, nor complex, nor really mysterious, though half-hidden mystery made so much of his external atmosphere.

His extraordinary career had three main stages. In the first he built up the frames of his army, secured excellent captains, declared open war against

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Ministers, Imperial Parliament, and English public opinion; fought campaign after campaign with implacable energy, unerring skill, and bewildering success; and after the election of 1885 at length found himself arbiter in the contest between the two distracted English parties. In his second stage, leaders in each of the rival camps made attempts at negotiation. The illustrious head of one of our confederacies at last came to terms with him, and in 1886 persuaded a majority of his followers to support an Irish alliance. The third was very short, and it was disastrous, ending in Parnell's political ruin and the desolating close of his life. Each of these different stages brought out, as was to be expected, different characteristics, and we shall do amiss if we import into Parnell's second stage any of the insensate violence of the third. Yet the elements of his nature, apart from accidents of time and opinion, were in substantial unity and in fact lay very much upon the surface. In spite of the endless artifices imposed on him by his political necessities, he was in himself of all men the least artificial.

Good observers were sensible of a marked change in manners and demeanour after he emerged from the desperate course of his revolt against Parliament. The sort of popularity that had come to him by the astonishing turn of events in 1889, seemed to thaw his usual frigidity. The crushing exposure of the forged letters, the nefarious and unconstitutional commission of the three judges, only comparable with some of the episodes of the contemporary affair of Dreyfus in the French Republic, stirred a general feeling that he was being unfairly used, and made him almost a popular hero. After the oration of his great counsel, Parnell wrote him a letter beginning with the words, "My heart was too full . . . ," simple enough, in which we heard an unfamiliar note. With Mr. Gladstone

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he was never quite at his ease, and it was noted on the other hand that on his visit to Hawarden the Liberal chief was nervous and not at his ease either. For myself, in our protracted dealings for some four or five years, I found him uniformly considerate, unaffectedly courteous, not ungenial, compliant rather than otherwise. In ordinary conversation he was pleasant, without much play of mind; temperament made him the least discursive of the human race. Apart from the business of the moment, he contributed little, because among other reasons he had no knowledge, not even the regular knowledge of common education and the man of the world. He would speak of his interest in finding minerals to work, and of experiments in assaying; but his schemes did not go far, and came to little. For personal talk he had little inclination, nor was he apt, as most politicians are, to run off into critical comments not always good-natured upon individuals. He took little interest or none in that buzz of miscellaneous talk about individuals which accounts for so much of the tidal agitations of the parliamentary world. Of the Catholic priests and prelates, and the Roman Conclave, he found no more to say than that he was not in the least afraid of any of them. He was one of the men with whom it was impossible to be familiar.

In affairs he proved himself an excellent ally; he was perfectly ready to make allowance for difficult circumstances; he never slurred them over, nor tried to pretend that rough ground was smooth, nor marched like the foolish kind of optimist, spoiling his sight by blinkers. He had nothing in common with that desperate species of counsellor who takes all the small points, and raises objections instead of helping to contrive expedients. He had nothing in common with colleagues, who in spite of first-rate ability sometimes made co-opera-

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tion with them like traversing a stretch of new and unrolled macadam. Of original or constructive faculty, outside of tactics, he showed little trace. Things were not lightened by the saving grace of humour, and what ought to have been cordial laughter seldom went beyond an amicable smile. In judgment on most other people, unless they chanced to gall his pride, he was usually tolerant; he liked two or three of his colleagues better than others; for one, the least brilliant or powerful of them, he had a real partiality.

The horrid weakness of envy and jealousy was unknown to him. From that his pride saved him. His sympathy with the misery of the Irish peasantry was real and it was constant, though he was too hard-headed and too disdainful to make a political trade of this sympathy, or even to say much about it. A general liking for his species he neither had nor professed. Of merely personal ambition, whether in its noble or its vulgar sense, he had, I think, little share or none. He had taken up a single cause against enemies who seemed invincible; his people had given him their trust; he bent his whole strength on winning; he was as confident as his nature would allow him to be confident of anything that his arms would conquer; for laurels he did not care. I have been at his side before and after more than one triumphal occasion, and discovered no sign of quickened pulse. His politics were a vehement battle, not a game, no affair of a career.

Here is a reminiscence of him at a famous meeting in a victorious moment:

March 13, 1889.

Went down at noon to the House. Found debate already begun. Lunched there, and followed debate until 5.10. Then Balfour sat down, and I followed with a short fiery dose, for 12 or 14 minutes, with my eye on the clock, our men cheering famously as point followed point. One

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of them said to me on going into the lobby, "I never saw as many red-hot shots fired in as few minutes." I enjoyed it immensely. It was an easy case.

It had been arranged that Parnell should dine with me, but time was short, so by Arnold M.'s kindness, I changed the venue and we dined, Parnell and I, with him at Stratton Street. I told A. M. what I had ordered at home and he reproduced my menu. Parnell drank hock—three or four glasses. The meal was uncommonly pleasant. P. did not suppose we should get the Government out for three years. Very cool, friendly, and confident as to coming well out of his cross-examination before the three judges. Just before stepping into the brougham, he pulled out of his black bag a tin box, and out of the tin box a camellia, wrapped in cotton-wool and tissue-paper—and he slowly adjusted it in his coat. He asked me to speak as long as possible, as he had not had time to put anything together; as a matter of fact he spoke without notes, and I should think it was quite true. Meeting very fine—charged to the brim with electric fluid. When I sat down, P. said in his low-toned way, "You've made a fine speech." Then his turn came: immense reception: most thrilling. He made no sign—not a hair moved. Spoke well. When he sat down, said to me quietly as matter of fact, "I am afraid I was not very well heard."

An ideologue he would certainly have hated as heartily as did Napoleon. We can have little doubt what answer he would have given to the question, if he had ever looked at it, which we may be sure he never did, whether idea is in politics another word for illusion, and principle, apart from forces, passions, interests, sincerity of motive, a mere chimera. But then he had something else to do than settling points of abstract speculation, even so vital as this.

In words he had little faith—this was part of the same temper—and even to a decent intellectual look in things, though he admired the talents of two of his men who were among the best speakers in the House, he was indifferent. Oratory, whether for him or against him, usually left him unmoved. Speakers were only pieces on the great chess-board.

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This alone marks a singular place in any gallery of political portraits.

I once asked Mr. Gladstone on the bench if he did not think Parnell a good speaker. "Indeed I do, for he has got the very rarest of all qualities in a speaker — *measure*. He always says exactly as much as, and not any more or less than, he means to say." His speeches, even when least exciting or rhetorical, were studded with incisive remarks singularly well compressed. Meredith, who thought Mr. Gladstone too much of an actor, was immensely struck by Parnell's style in a speech at a public banquet to which I persuaded our poet to go. No public man of his time was more free of the evil arts of Pose, nobody more disdainful of playing to the gallery, though when he had a practical object to gain, he did not forget a ruling passion in his hearers, as when he talked of snapping the last link to a Fenian audience in America.

Here is the language of one of the most serious and important of the Irish party a few weeks before the catastrophe of 1890: "Nobody knows Parnell's greatness as a leader who has not seen him tested for long years at close quarters; his imperturbable coolness, his firmness, his hardness, his eye for the point essential at the moment." Speeches were secondary, and when thoughtless people talk of fine speeches as the essence of parliamentary government, they forget that one of the two noblest English orators of our day was in a hopeless minority in the questions for which he cared most and spoke at his loftiest.

Again and again we have undoubtedly to think of Parnell as unique. I have heard how he took a certain view of the construction of a clause in a settlement. His lawyer assured him that he was wrong. They went to Sir Horace Davey, who said the lawyer was quite right, and that Parnell's notion was contrary to the very a b c of legal

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construction. Parnell was immovable and stuck to his own notion against the best authority in Lincoln's Inn. Yet he was not seldom wise enough to seek advice, and even to take it from people not much less firm than himself, for there are some kinds of pride that go with a curious kind of modesty. He often told me that he was indolent; was never sure of anything; had a host of what people call superstitions about unlucky signs and omens; was the creature of strange and vivid forebodings; he knew how to wait on circumstances and the secrets of fate. All this by no means made him into Plato's "bad tamer of wild animals." Most of his history is the story of one of the most pre-eminently good tamers of the most astonishing menagerie. A secret consultation with a Conservative viceroy one day; with a spy from a murder club in New York the next; with a Whig Catholic Bishop in Ireland the day after. The irony of it gave him no private enjoyment; irony was not in his line; the phantasmagoria was all in the day's work. The mixture of the calculating spirit of an election agent with violence, and of invincible pride with something like squalor, made an amazing paradox. We have to remember that he was a revolutionary leader, using constitutional forms, and no varnish of respectable words can make him anything else. To call him a Whig is to stultify our political history and its vocabulary. One might as well call Piero Strozzi a Whig—the Florentine patriot in the sixteenth century who declared that for the liberation of his city he would appeal first to God, then to the World, and then to the Devil.

To turn for a moment to the most awkward of points. It is painful to think that history has shown only too abundantly how hard it is for an actor in times of revolution to conform to austere standards of truth. Of our great Queen, for example, Oliver, the Protector, nobly said, "Queen Elizabeth

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of famous memory; we need not be ashamed to call her so." Yet the warmest of her partisans would be slow to claim for her the famous pithy encomium on our immortal George Washington.

I am bound to say for my own part, I had in this second stage no single complaint to make of want of truthfulness or loyalty or good faith. I am tempted to repeat the little story how on the eve of the Home Rule Bill in 1886 he asked me if he might have a draft of the main provisions for communication to half a dozen of his confidential colleagues. After some demur I rather boldly consented, with warnings to him of the frightful mischief that would follow leakage. Not a word came out. Some time afterwards he recalled the incident. "Three of the men," he said, "who saw the draft were newspaper men, and any newspaper would have given a thousand pounds for it. No wonderful virtue, you may say. But how many of your House of Commons would believe it?" The case is trivial, but it was in keeping with his general course so far as we were concerned. His demeanour varied with mood and occasion, but my own experience was good. In the difficult days of the forged letters and the special commission I asked Sir Charles Russell whether he thought Parnell was a man who would impress an English jury favourably. "Yes," Russell answered, "I do think so, if he appeared as he did last year in his statement to the House of Commons, as to the facsimile letter." After all, if the great Cavour himself had come before a European Areopagus, it is not certain that he would have convinced them that he was telling them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Yet Cavour dealt faithfully by Victor Emanuel. Must we not against our will agree with Green, our Oxford moralist, that the assertion of Cromwell's unselfish enthusiasm is quite consistent with the imputation to him of much unscrupulous-

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ness, violence, simulation, and dissimulation,—sins which no one has escaped who ever led or controlled a revolution ?

He carried secretiveness and unexplained absences to an extraordinary degree that painfully embarrassed his Irish colleagues. They came to me in anxious fret one day about his health ; they knew that he was consulting some specialist, but the specialist's name and speciality he would not disclose, even to his ordinary doctor. Could I tell them ? they asked. As it happened I could have told them, but was bound to respect their leader's harmless secret. They were sore at his making the plan of campaign answerable for the Coercion Act that followed it. For two years, they argued, he had been practically absent from Ireland, and was ignorant of the actual circumstances of Irish politics. The physical-force men were stronger than he knew.

In 1890 he was much exercised on land purchase. He once asked me to speak with him, having devised a very complex and impracticable set of notions of his own, which he slowly expounded to me. I asked would his people like it ? He did not care whether they did or not, he had thought it over for ten years. He presently unfolded it in the House of Commons in a speech which was slow, interesting, serious, but horribly obscure. It was lucky for me that I possessed the answer to the riddle. The House was profoundly still, but so, too, was the general confusion of mind profound. The most important of his lieutenants came to me at midnight ; the speech had completely mystified them ; could I explain ? Mr. Gladstone laughed at the oddity of it all. " It is difficult enough for him to be absent and inaccessible, but if besides that, when he does appear—to plunge into unexplained politics, that is indeed too bad ! "

It was not easy to recognise in Parnell the sovereign element that men call Greatness, not

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even while you realised the greatness of the victory that he had achieved for a good cause. It is all a question of words, and few words are used with less attempt at precision. Carlyle curiously thought it an open question whether Sir Walter Scott was a great man, though pronouncing him one of the healthiest of men. In the field of action strong and concentrated will, clear sight, large purpose are not enough to make a great man. One could not resist this feeling of greatness in the presence of revolutionists whom I had known, like Gambetta or Mazzini. But then they cherished moral ideals and had an eye for moral forces. Parnell's political physiognomy was wholly different. Of his mordant and victorious strength the proof was ample, yet he cannot be counted among the Deliverers who left heroic tradition and lifted men's hearts to patriot song. Still we have to recollect *Victoriae rationem non reddi*, "*it is idle to call the conqueror to account.*"

Degrees of comparison are one test. Nobody would raise Parnell to the lofty stature of Flood or Grattan. Strange and unwelcome as it may sound, the Irish leader most easily comparable to him in iron strength of will, vivid perception of the forces on his own side of a struggle without quarter — fierce, fearless, invincible concentration — was Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare, whose vehement powers of character and argument did so much to draw Pitt to the Irish Union. Between Parnell and O'Connell I have sometimes thought how interesting a Plutarchian parallel might be drawn. The older statesman, who extorted the political rights of his own religious faith and the faith of his people from the Duke of Wellington and Peel and Great Britain, had a large and comprehensive mind; his appeals and principles as a whole, in spite of all his rough or ruffian language, must be pronounced wide, generous, fertile, rich, elevating, massive. No

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adversities affected his fortitude and cheerfulness. O'Connell felt the historic, still more the moral forces, that justified and inspired the swelling movement of which he had made himself the central force, and he courageously associated it with other emancipatory movements of the time. Lecky boldly compares him to Martin Luther. Other very competent judges assure us, with good reason, that he was a more ardent admirer and a more genuine disciple of Bentham than were many Whigs. The French Dominican orator, Lacordaire, carried things still further, and actually put O'Connell in a class with Constantine, Charlemagne, and Pope Gregory VII. Then there are the lines in Bulwer's fine half-forgotten poem, *St. Stephen's!* on Erin's chief, whose large faults should not make us "deny Time's large apology":

> Hate at St. Omer's into caution drilled,
> In Dublin law-courts subtilised and skilled:
> Hate in the man, whatever else appear
> Fickle or false, was steadfast and sincere;
> But with that hate a nobler passion dwelt,
> To hate the Saxon was to love the Celt. . . .
> Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
> Wall'd by wide air, and roof'd by boundless heaven;
> Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
> And wave on wave flow'd into space away.
> Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
> Even to the centre of the hosts around,
> And as I thought rose the sonorous swell
> As from the Church-tower swings the silvery bell
> Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide
> It glided, easy as a bird may glide;
> To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
> It played with each wild passion as it went,
> Now stirr'd the uproar, now the murmur still'd,
> And sobs or laughter answer'd as it will'd.

Calling one day upon Cardinal Logue at the Collegio Hibernico, I found the silver casket in the church of St. Agatha, containing the relics of O'Connell and presenting in relief his advance to the table of the House of Commons, writ in hand,

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worthy of a place among the best of the memories awakened in mighty Rome. If I had been of that persuasion, I should have begged the good Cardinal for a mass for poor O'Connell's intention. One wishes that on the silver casket might have been inscribed his own golden words: "Every religion is good, every religion is true—to him who in his due caution and conscience believes it. There is but one bad religion, that of a man who professes a faith which he does not believe; but the good religion may be, and often is, corrupted by the wretched and wicked prejudices which admit a difference of opinion as a cause of hatred."

The other liberator who followed O'Connell, and whose strong hand we all of us felt half a century later, was concentrated, intense, bare, and it was no ill-natured observer who talked of an air of "hard attorneyism" in him. In both O'Connell and Parnell the struggle against England was a vehement conflict of strong natures, not a dispute about pious opinions. Strong natures are not the same as rich natures, as was easy to see in the present conflict. To both of them the verdict was the thing they cared for. Parnell's conception was the more original, for Catholic emancipation was already an old story when O'Connell put on his armour. If Parnell's idea was not wholly new, his was the strategic insight that discerned two things, and the angry, bitter, tenacious will that carried the ideas into action. One was the vulnerability of the House of Commons, the other the necessity of tacking political on to agrarian agitation. When all is said, this was a master-key.

Let us not forget as we pass that there was another. The first Home Rule Bill was rudely defeated. Mr. Gladstone was old, but it was he who crossed the Rubicon. The policy was thenceforth stamped on the flag of Liberalism; thus definitely committed to the cause that Parnell and

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his phalanx had brought to an inexorable head. The ardour with which Mr. Gladstone summoned his party forces to the field, the grandeur and the strength of his way of stating and urging the case, the power of his double appeal to cogent historical reason and to sympathetic conscience — all had brought the Irish question into a place from which it could never be again dislodged, not even by Irishmen. This made the battle sure. Of Parnell more is to be unfortunately seen in his third stage, when Vengeance became the policy of a tragic day.

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CHAPTER VII

THE TORNADO

No less hazards meet the statesman at the council-board than accost the soldier in the field; and one had need be as good a fencer as the other ought to be a fighter to defend himself. . . . He must walk with a wary eye and a steady foot indeed who never trips nor stumbles at any of those cross-blocks which sometime or other will assuredly be cast before him; and it is well if he carries not only his foot, but his head too, so sure as to fall by neither of them.—SOUTH'S *Sermons*.

How did things stand four years after the great repulse of 1886? Coercion and its episodes in Ireland had secured a certain acquiescence in England, but they were not liked, and people felt that they led nowhere. The argumentative case for an Irish Parliament had been pressed with energy and constancy at our party meetings all over the kingdom. As for my own share in these oratorical transactions, it gave me a little harmless gratification to read that Lord Salisbury once checked the mechanical hissing of my name at a Tory gathering by remarking that after all there was usually "some solid thought" at the bottom of my speeches, and that though the most direct of opponents I did not provoke animosity. Events in Ireland slowly did more to bring opinion round than either solid thought or the best rhetoric. The electoral omens improved as time went on, and by the late autumn of 1890 the quicksilver stood delightfully high in our barometer. Then suddenly in a moment a tremendous squall burst over the flowing tide, and when it cleared watchers beheld

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the Irish leader's bark founder upon the rocks, and his crew wrestling with wind and water for their lives. History was ransacked for a parallel. Parnell was Mirabeau, in whom private fault destroyed a saviour of his country. He was Robespierre brought to the scaffold at the reaction of Thermidor. He was the Satan of *Paradise Lost* "hurled with hideous ruin and combustion down."

On the very eve of this dire wreck I had a long conversation with the prosperous commander. Here is a note of the interview in my hotel at Brighton taken next morning:

Brighton Metropole, Nov. 10, 1890.

I had fixed the time from 6 to 8 and, therefore, it was a virtuous degree of punctuality when he came walking cheerfully into the room at 8.20. He has certainly as fine and pleasing a carriage as any man in the House of Commons,—free, erect, lithe, and with every mark of unaffected dignity. He was more than usually cordial and gracious. I asked him whether he had dined; he said he would be glad to dine with me, if I was going to have a meal. Whenever the waiter came into the room, I could not but notice that, as if by mechanical impulse, P. turned his chair away so as to have an averted face for the invader. He smoked a couple of cigars after dinner, lounging in an arm-chair drawn pretty close to the fire, for he is chilly. I opened the conversation by saying that we were anxious to know what line he meant to take on Land Purchase. He said that he wished to press both for a limit on the size of holdings to be purchased, and for a veto on the transaction in the hands of a local authority. Generally his view was that we ought to make the most of the 33 millions provided by the Government Bill. In settling the real Land Question did I think that Parliament was likely to make a further advance? I replied that beyond the constitution of the 33 millions into a circulating fund, I did not believe so. Well, then, he went on, that is a good reason why we should be careful not to let a pound of the 33 millions be wasted—*i.e.* used for cases which really give no trouble either to landlords or, through them, to a Government.

I mentioned the proposal—that if a local authority should voluntarily guarantee a transaction it should have an interest to the extent of ¼ per cent annually on the

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advance, with payment. He had not much to say on this, but seemed to approve. As to procedure in the debate on the address, he said (but I wonder if this is accurate) that when he first came into the H. of C. the address was disposed of by 11 o'clock; it was Ireland that led to the innovation, though now other people had taken Irish methods up.

I marked more than once in subsequent talk that he assumed the Land Question to be settled. That is to say, he agrees with Spencer and me that this door for agitation is to be closed before or with H. R.

He agreed with me, too, that powers should be taken for the compulsory expropriation of landlords who should prove themselves centres of disturbance. I said that I had tried hard for this, backed by Vernon, one of the most capable of Unionist experts, in framing the Bill of '86. I reminded him that if we could see a way, compulsory sale on the demand of ¾ of tenants on an estate would win farmers in Ulster.

We had some curious talk as to the future. I sounded him as to Spencer for Viceroy. He saw no objection to S. but slightly in his favour as a man knowing the ropes. Then for Chief Secretary. "I assume that it is quite out of the question," I asked guilelessly, "that you should take it yourself?" "Oh, yes, quite—or that any of my party should join a Government." "Then what do you say to —— or ——?" "Neither of them would do at all. But surely there is no doubt you would take it yourself?" "Of course, I should be entirely in Mr. G.'s hands in the matter." "Your record, you see, is so clear." He surprised me by his earnestness on this head. Anyhow, he went on, it must be an Englishman during the time of transition. And then, with his plain, cold recognition of disagreeable facts, moderately stated—"*Of course, the Englishman would not have a very easy time of it*"—a prophecy that will be abundantly fulfilled, I daresay, either in my skin or another's. I pressed him as to our law officers, and our serious disadvantage in having no seat for one. He replied that he would do his best to find a seat for one of our two lawyers when the general election came, but he could not do it before that.

"Campaign estates? Are they not expecting to be put back the day after the general election?" "Well," he said, "if the Tories lose the election, the landlords will know that their game is up, and will govern themselves

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accordingly." "I don't believe that," said I; "on the contrary, they will be only too glad to embarrass the Liberal Government by campaign estates or anything else." He spoke of his colleagues with much benignity, save as to ——, the very mention of whom made him angry. Of —— he said nothing. "I like ——. He is always coming to me with some wonderful tale. He is always at high pressure, as you say. But I like him. He's genuine." "S—— does excellent work; see what he's done in the Dublin Corporation. There is always such *finish* in all he does." I laughed. "We sometimes think that the finish does not come soon enough in his speeches." "They are indeed long."

He talked a little about himself: liked birds to eat better than beasts; liked mountains better than sea; his favourite place was a small shooting lodge of his up in the Wicklow hills, originally planted there as a barrack against the rebels in 1798. "I'm a very lazy fellow; when I have a thing in hand, I can stick to it like wax; but I'm naturally lazy."

At the end of dinner I said to him, "There's one point on which I have no right to speak to you—and if you don't like it, you can say so. But it is important we should know whether certain legal proceedings soon to come on are likely to end in your disappearance from the lead for a time." He smiled all over his face, playing with his fork.

"My disappearance! Oh no. No chance of it. Nothing in the least leading to disappearance, so far as I am concerned, will come out of the legal proceedings. The other side don't know what a broken-kneed horse they are riding." "I'm delighted to hear that," said I, "for I, for my part of course, regard you as vital to the whole business." "Well," he said, "the Irish people are very slow to give a man their confidence, and they are still more slow to withdraw it." I inferred from his talk of the broken-kneed horse that he meant there would be no adverse decree.

A word or two on our future difficulties, Mr. G.'s age, trouble with the Q., all a P.M.'s worry of composing jars among colleagues.

"Yes, he should have thought of all this. It showed immense courage at his age taking H. R. all alone on his own back, and carrying a reluctant party with him." All in a callous and neutral tone.

About 11.30 R. appeared. Parnell very courteous and

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pleasant, and neither frigid nor stiff with her. He departed just upon midnight.

On the whole, I feel as if I had seen him better than on any previous occasion; there was so much more ease between us, and I have never known him so really genial.

In every word one felt the voice of the man looking at government, putting his finger on the difficulties of managing men, using occasions, drawing decisive lines, sending his glance forward and around. A firm hand, and a clear cold eye for matters into which he has taken the trouble really to look.

In other matters extremely random—as when he asked if we did not expect at least 150 majority. When I said that for myself I did not dream of more than 50 or 60, he said, "Ah, that won't be enough for a H. R. Bill." Nor do I forget his absurdly confident prediction that we should certainly and easily win in 1886.

He expected —— & Co. would raise £150,000 in America. Condemned their violence. Felt sure John Bull hates turbulence and unrest. I said I could never positively make up my mind whether quiet or unrest was the less favourable to Irish Nationalism. It was an eternal dilemma; if quiet, H. R. not necessary; if turbulent, H. R. not safe.

He thought one effect of H. R. would be that Irishmen who had made money abroad would come home when things were settled, and would start industries. Spoke of priests; is sure the clergy, or the prelates at any rate (if not the priests), are beginning to intrigue against him; but has no fear of them. It is certain that if Parnell is at the helm, the task, however unpleasant, will be at any rate comparatively safe.

In the same connection he referred to what had passed at Hawarden on the subject of constabulary. He did not seem to object to the idea thrown out, as he said, by Mr. G., of the retention of R.I.C. by Governor-General for a period. But he let fall, as if speaking to the fire, the sinister observation, "Of course, if you once give us a legislative assembly, details like this of constabulary we can put to right after."

Curious example of his insouciance. Something was said of the Under Secretary at Dublin Castle. "By the way," he asked, "who is the Under Secretary? I forget." I recall other examples. Like his asking one of us at the Eighty Club Dinner, whether Spencer had been Viceroy

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more than once. So wisely does he have no atom in his mind that is not strictly relevant to the object of the hour. *Nugae* of personality don't count. I wish some other politicians of my acquaintance were more like him.

He observed that he thought the only way out of the difficulty arising from the retention of Irish members seemed to be a reduction of numbers to 80 or so. But I answered, "I thought you once said that Grattan's error lay in disbanding volunteers, and that you would never disband yours?"

"Yes," he answered, "we must not forget that Balfour may come back again. Still, if the country would accept reduction as helping to a solution, he would make no difficulty."

The Irish, he said, are not at all bad people to govern. "They have some prejudices, but if you don't wound them, they are as reasonable as any other nation." Thought Ireland a very good place to live out of, and England the best of countries to live in!!

A week later the divorce decree was pronounced. As was inevitable in so fierce and close a struggle, it instantly set the political world in a blaze. In three days was the moment for the great Liberal organisation to assemble.

Diary, 1890. *November* 20.—Found myself at Sheffield. Delighted to receive a letter from Mr. G. containing an "abozzo," as he headed it, of what it would be well for us to say. He introduced a Scotch sentence, playful, but pithy and to the point, about Parnell's continued leadership: "It'll na dee," he wrote. "I say this again and again to myself, I say, I mean in the interior and silent forum." So much for the myth that it was his two lieutenants who frightened him into his decision after Sheffield. Harcourt soon arrived, and he and I spent the evening alone, while the rest of the large party who had dined at M.'s went off to some political conversazione.

H. very restless—no wonder. "How doth Fortune banter us," he said, quoting Bolingbroke's well-worn words to Swift on the death of Queen Anne in 1714. Certainly our fall from the confidence

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we had after the Eccles victory [a bye-election] might well be compared with the end of the four years of the Tory ministry. In spite of our evil circumstances Harcourt was extremely amusing, and the difference between good fortune and bad ceased to be perceptible.

November 21.—Heard of the angry currents running against Parnell's continued leadership. It was not only the devout world; the secular caucus man was quite as strong. The breach of moral law, one must remember, was not all. It was accompanied by small incidents that lent themselves to ridicule and a sense of squalor. How could candidate or voter fight elections under a banner so peculiarly tainted? There could be no mistake about it. Harcourt and I discussed and re-discussed. The meeting at night was immense and splendid. I found, before we began, that Spence Watson as chairman was about to fulminate a red-hot protest against Parnell. I urged and entreated him to leave it alone, and summoned Harcourt to my aid. It was all that our united efforts could do to persuade him to say nothing about it. We went in, and Watson made a short speech, leaving P. out. When he sat down, he said to me with flushed face and flashing eye, "I never did such violence to my conscience in my whole life!" Harcourt was dull, and I was much duller, but luckily short. In fact, I felt we both of us failed. —— pleased them best, by high-stepping nonsense of a high Socialist flavour. Went to supper with Watson, who had completely got back his composure, like a good golden-hearted fellow as he is.

November 23.—Schnadhorst, the head of our party organisation, called: thinks the election fatally lost by this desperate business; one candidate bolted already, and new ones would be all the less likely to come forward. But then, I said, "this means the end of Mr. G.'s career." "Would

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it be a bad end ? " he asked. " What a pity," said I, " that such a fine set of fellows as we saw at Sheffield should be broken up." " They won't break up," he answered ; " they will rally to you, and by that I mean you personally." " If Mr. G. goes, I fancy that I go too." " I expected," he said, " that this would pass through your mind, but it must not lodge there."

Harcourt and Loulou came for an hour. H. very equable ; read me his letter to Mr. G. to the effect that he ought to write to Parnell urging retirement—such letter to be printed. I said I did not expect that P. would yield even to that and gave him some reasons. " I confess it is a great relief to me," he said, " that I shall not have to take office." " So it is to me too," I said, " I can assure you." H. truly observed how interesting it would be to watch how Mr. G. with all his wisdom and experience would deal with such a position as that in which we were now placed. On the whole Harcourt obeys Thiers's excellent maxim, " Dans la politique il faut ne prendre rien au tragique, et tout au sérieux."

The torrents raged and foamed, both noisy and deep. Unionists did not abuse the advantage of having one of the ten commandments on their side ; still, after the failure of the forged letters it was for them a compensation not to be despised. The half-baked Home Ruler hoped it might lead to a not unwelcome escape from a dubious policy. A very few thought it would be wiser to leave the disaster unnoticed, and to let Ireland decide for herself. The date of the meeting of Parliament had come, when minds must be made up. There was in truth but one mind.

Monday, November 24, '90.

> O that a man might know
> The end of this day's business ere it come!
> But it sufficeth that the day will end,
> And then the end is known.

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That was how I awoke. I got a card from Mr. G. begging me to consult with Harcourt and Arnold M. as soon as possible, so that we might be ready for him on his return from Hawarden at 4.30. None of us had seen him since Sheffield. At noon we three met at Stratton Street; Harcourt read the letter he had got from Mr. G. that morning, announcing the repudiation of Parnell, and containing the famous phrase that P.'s retention would mean the reduction of Mr. G.'s own leadership almost to a nullity. I told them the nature of my talk with P.'s secretary the night before—especially dwelling on the statement that on the previous Friday P. had been in a yielding mood out of consideration for Mr. G. We all agreed, of course, that if P. would depart of his own accord, this would be best; though we also foresaw that P. would find it convenient to plead pressure from Mr. G. as an excuse for his retirement.

At 4.30 I went to Carlton Gardens, and found Granville, Harcourt, and Arnold already there in the library with Mr. G. They had told him of my communications with Parnell's secretary on Sunday, and we proceeded to consider our course. Harcourt had gone round to the view that Parnell should be told to go, without any *égards* and without waiting for spontaneous action on his part. I remonstrated, and Mr. G. strongly took the same line. "I must think of the after reckoning," he said with emphasis. Harcourt was very strong that in the communication to Parnell Mr. G. should express his own opinion that the immorality itself had made him unfit and impossible, and not merely found himself on the opinion of the party upon the immorality. The party would expect it, he said; would not be satisfied otherwise; Mr. G.'s moral reputation required it. Mr. G. stoutly fought any such position. "What," cried Mr. G., "because a man is what is called leader of a party, does that constitute him a judge and accuser of

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faith and morals? I will not accept it. It would make life intolerable." So the precise nature of the communication to be made to P. through M'Carthy was settled, and I understood it was to be in the terms of Mr. G.'s letter to Harcourt, including the passage about Mr. G.'s own leadership.

Mr. G. then went upstairs to talk to M'Carthy, and we remained below trying to persuade Mrs. G. to let Mr. G. dine with Arnold M. and the rest of us that night at the ex-Cabinet dinner on the eve of the Session. After much trouble we prevailed, and Mr. G. was well pleased when he came downstairs and found it so settled.

He reported what had passed with M'Carthy, who did not know where P. was, but hoped to see him next day, and would then privately show him a short and concise letter that Mr. Gladstone would prepare. The Queen's speech was brought in, and that not very succulent document read to us. We next discussed the line to be taken by me to Parnell, if, as I had reason to expect, I should see him next forenoon. H. wished a letter to be written direct to P., but Mr. G. felt that it would be better to write to me than to make an appeal outright to P., and to this conclusion we came. Mr. G. then sat down in his resolute way to his table, drafted the short letter to M'C., began the cardinal letter to me. We left him at work.

At 8 to dinner in Stratton Street. I sat next to Granville, and next to him was Mr. G. We were all gay enough, and as unlike as possible to a marooned crew. Towards the end of the feast Mr. G. handed to me, at the back of Granville's chair, the draft of the famous letter in an unsealed envelope. While he read the Queen's speech to the rest, I perused and re-perused the letter; Granville also read it. I said to Mr. G. across Granville, "But you have not put in the very thing that would be most likely of all things to move him." Harcourt again regretted

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that it was addressed to me and not to P., and agreed with me that it ought to be strengthened as I had indicated, if it was meant really to affect P.'s mind. Mr. G. rose, went to the writing table, and with me standing by, wrote, on a sheet of Arnold M.'s grey paper, the important insertion. I marked then and there under his eyes the point at which the insertion was to be made, and put the whole into my pocket. Nobody else besides H. was consulted about it, or saw it. After the letter came to be printed, Mr. G. remarked to me that he thought the insertion was to be a postscript. He did not complain nor care, but was it not so? "No," I said, "it really was not; I marked the place in pencil at the moment." Just imagine—"*P.S.* By the way, I forgot to mention that if he does not go, my leadership of the Liberal Party is reduced to a nullity." What a postscript, to be sure!

Had some talk with Spencer in the drawing-room. He was the one man who doubted whether we were right in putting any screw at all upon Parnell, and he pressed earnestly that P. was the only man who could drive the Irish team. Most true—if only there were no English electors to be thought of.

Walked home by midnight—with pretty serious thoughts for the morrow. Glad to find that I keep my head cooler than most.

November 25, '90.—At 11.45 on Tuesday morning I received a telegram from C., P.'s secretary, to the effect that he could not reach his friend.[1]

I then went at once to M'Carthy and found that neither had he been able to communicate with Parnell, as Mr. Gladstone had desired. They all seemed at their wits' end. They did not know what to do, nor what to expect. I told M'C. that C. had promised me to go down to Brighton on the Monday afternoon, and tell Parnell I wished to see him. I also told him of the telegram I had just had.

[1] See a communication of mine in the *Times*, August 18, 1891.

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I hastened home, on the off chance of Parnell having appeared. After lunch went down to Carlton Gardens and found Mr. G. eager and agitated. "P. is obdurate," he said. I asked him how he knew that, and he then told me that Arnold M. had just been in to say that M'C. had been to him (a little after 2) to report that he had seen P., that he had delivered Mr. G.'s message, and that P. meant to stand to his guns. I said that I might as well at any rate try to find P. down at the H. of C. "Yes, I think you had better be on the ground." So down to the H. of C. I went. The story of the letter and its reception by Mr. Parnell I have told elsewhere, and need not repeat.[1]

Then Harcourt, Arnold, and I went to dinner. News of the letter swiftly got out. Two or three Irish members came in much excitement to my table to know if the story of the letter was true, and, above all, if Mr. Gladstone had really said, and really meant it, that he would withdraw from the leadership. I said very little, and begged them to get the letter itself from the reporters. Tremendous sensation and panic among the Irishmen all night. Parnell sat sullenly in the smoke-room, and would no more consent to go to the meeting which they proposed to hold than Barnardine would consent to go with Abhorson to be hanged.

House up very early.

Much seemed to depend upon the five or six Irish delegates now at Cincinnati. All were looking for their decision. Few men have ever been placed in sharper difficulty. On the last day of November they declared against Parnell's leadership. The Roman Catholic prelates condemned it. A short period followed of attempts by him to draw us on the ground of controversial points in the structure of a future Bill. They were obviously futile.

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, Book X. chap. v.

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Fatuity could go no further than to suppose that we should in a moment of such unspeakable confusion commit ourselves to details of a scheme that might never come into being, and should, besides, perpetrate such folly in concert with one whose claims as leader had been publicly renounced. For many long weeks at the beginning of 1891 I was the centre of active negotiations with the Irish leaders. Two of them were liable to arrest on English soil, and Boulogne was their headquarters. Their true object was to make terms that would be possible for us to entertain, and at the same time satisfy Parnell. The Boulogne negotiations—so called—were idle from the start. That did not lessen the stress, and it tested all the power of will that I could muster to hold the fort against the inexhaustible ingenuities of Parnell, intent on riding off with flying colours, against the intimidated anxieties of our Irish allies, against the sharp suspicions and misgivings of our British adherents. But, to borrow a sagacious reflection from Halifax the Trimmer, which I had now and on some other occasions to commend to one or more of my colleagues, "The Man who is Master of Patience is Master of Everything."

In February two of the most prominent of the Irishmen, against whom warrants were out for their share in some agrarian doings, returned to England and were duly arrested. I went to see them at Scotland Yard on their way to Ireland, and one evening (Feb. 12) I found myself among the policemen. The two were glad to see me; we were left alone in the stiff, official little room, the doors left ajar; we talked with perfect freedom. They both warned me that Parnell would secure 25 seats at the election, and that all talk of his losing his seat for Cork was nonsense. Dillon was much struck by the impression made on me by Parnell's declaration at Ennis the previous Sunday, that he would

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sanction no veto in British Parliament. I said, "This repudiation of parliamentary supremacy is absolutely fatal to any H. R. associated with Parnell." —— had felt just the same. I gave them a full account of all that took place in connection with Mr. G.'s letter to me of November 24. It removed some erroneous notions, planted by Parnell. After about half an hour, the officer came in and apologetically hinted that I should go. They said good-bye, with much emotion and many words of warm gratitude to me for my part in the business. All through the glories of summer they will be in their narrow cells.

One evening (Nov. 27) in the week of the explosion I dined with Chamberlain—a family party. He was extremely pleasant; no crowing or jubilation, but rather disgusted, as he said, that a controversy in which all the best brains in Parliament and out of it had been at work for five years should be at last decided, not on the merits, but by an accident. He said with intention, "What we ought to do, my dear Morley, is to keep quiet; for it may be that in six months or twelve months we shall have to *revise the conditions*." He repeated this counsel in the same phrase as I was leaving.

Such a thought was natural. It entered many minds, both large minds and small. Revision of the conditions really meant, and could only mean, a narrowing of the policy. Whether this was wise or not, at least for the three or four Liberal leaders, it was in fact impossible. They had induced the two men then locked up in Scotland Yard, and many thousands of Irishmen besides, to leave their chief, in reliance on the continued perseverance and good faith of British Liberals. This was the crucial point of the whole situation. Events were abundantly to show that their reliance was justified.

We had occasional outbursts in the House. The Unionist Government had a measure for the pur-

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chase of Irish land upon the stocks. Our situation was embarrassing. The British Radicals think they want to resist the Bill with might and main; the Irish Friendlies dare not resist, and probably don't want to resist, with Parnell on the flank ready to denounce them for rejecting a boon to Ireland. So we were in a cross-fire and could not move rejection *simpliciter*. Harcourt restless but impotent; keeps worrying that we should please the English Radicals by a stronger line. Yes, and every step taken in this direction gives a new advantage to Parnell.

At 8 I went to Courtney in the Chair. "What I shall like best is that I should come on immediately on your return from dinner, with nobody in the House but you and me and Balfour." I went out to dine at 8.40, and at last, after some fussings and divisions, I rose about 9.50. The House quickly filled, and I had an attentive audience. For a wonder, I really think my oration deserved the compliments that were paid to it for brevity and concision. Parnell followed Balfour, in a speech strikingly clever and astute. As I walked along Victoria Street on my way home, Courtney and H. Hobhouse overtook me. *C.* "I was just saying what an admirable piece of debate the three speeches made; like the good old days."

The following day the scene was changed, and vicious lightning flashed. *April* 17.—Morning sitting: Land Bill. Sexton opened; a friendly passage about me as the ally of Ireland in dark and critical times. S. loudly cheered from the Irish benches, Mr. G. joining in sonorous, half-suppressed tones. Presently Healy spoke, rasping, biting, against Parnell, but not over-effectual. However, it roused P. I have never seen such a sight of concentrated fury. He was not a foot off from Healy and Sexton; he glared into their very faces, hate and revenge in his eyes and in the harsh, passionate

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tones of voice. Chamberlain said to me, "He's too clever for you."

We might be sure that a politician of Parnell's calibre had a serious computation at the bottom of what seemed mere frenzy. Time, he thought, was the only thing wanted for his ultimate success. The great obstacle was Mr. Gladstone's popularity in Ireland, but then he was now over eighty and must soon disappear. The force of the anti-Parnellite enemy in Ireland lay in alliance with English Liberals. That would be worthless if Tories, as was then probable, should win the next election. If the Tories won the election, they would bestow county boards; these boards would become centres of nationalist agitation, and people would return to him. If the Liberals won, they would be sure to produce a Bill that must inevitably fall short of extreme aspirations, and of these aspirations he would at once make himself the angry voice. All this I was told by one in Parnell's confidence, and it was undoubtedly true that his quarrel with us had thrown him from being a Conservative force, into the arms of the Extremists. For us the policy based on such a forecast left an extremely awkward legacy for three or four years. For Parnell himself, as the dark fates swiftly decided, it mattered little.

In October 1891 I chanced to be at Mentmore. I sat one day in Rosebery's room, when a telegram was brought to him. He looked at me and read it: *Parnell died last night at Brighton.* Well might it be a painful shock. He has had much vile usage from Englishmen, the pity has been that he avenged it on Ireland. A fierce wild wake took place in the cemetery at Glasnevin a week later: a terrible spasm of grief, faction, hate convulsed Dublin.

In the last speech he ever made in England (Newcastle, July 25, 1891) Parnell spoke of me: "I do not mistrust Mr. Morley. I never have mistrusted him. I know that he is one of the very few

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Englishmen, perhaps the only Liberal in Parliament, whose record on the Irish question has been consistent from first to last. I tell you, fellow-countrymen, that if the Liberal party was mainly composed of Morleys, I should not perhaps have pressed so strongly for guarantees as I have done."

In a conversation with Mr. Gladstone towards the end of the year, he asked me what I thought we should do in case of a divided Ireland, a Parnellite Ireland. Which would be best? I told him that from the Irish point of view, anything was better than Irish Nationalists divided. I said what there was to be said for Parnell's line. He was only five and forty; he might well fear that Irish factions would spring up if he were to go; he might have made up his mind that, whether he went or stayed, we should lose the general election when it came. *Mr. G.* "You have no regrets at the course we took?" *J. M.* "None—none. It was inevitable. I have never doubted. That does not prevent bitter lamentation that inevitable it was."

One print said of me in those days that, though I wore a Stoic's look, I was in truth the Spartan with a gnawing fox-cub hidden beneath his cloak. The figure is extreme, but those were not wrong who guessed that it must be an hour of poignant memories. Others put down in their diaries that I was "full of vigour; if he can only be got to bind the party tight to their pledges, so much the better for them." This was, in truth, my limited, but not unimportant, function, both in private counsel and on public platforms, for several years to come.

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CHAPTER VIII

HOLIDAY IN NORFOLK

Consult your reason betimes. I do not say it will always prove an unerring guide, for human reason is not infallible, but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it, but adopt neither blindly and implicitly; try both by that best rule God has given to direct us—reason. Of all the truths do not decline that of thinking. The host of mankind can hardly be said to think; their prejudices are almost all adoptive [heterodox included].—LORD CHESTERFIELD.

AFTER the black clouds of the Irish storm had drifted away across St. George's Channel, parliamentary business resumed its course, its energy lessened by speculations as to the next election, and the effect that the catastrophe might then prove to have produced. Social pleasures had their due place. Here, for instance:

Diary, 1891.

Dinner at Marlborough House (*March* 18).—I arrived pretty punctually about 8.30, and stumbled against Randolph in the hall. "I've been paying you a compliment this afternoon," I said. "You're always very civil to me. What was it? Eight Hours?" *J. M.* "Oh no; no compliments for you on Eight Hours. 'Twas drink." In the large hall I found the P. of W. and the King of the Belgians. The P. shook hands, and presented me to the King, who did the same. I was chatting with Goschen and Smith, when Lord Salisbury came up. He said to Smith, "I hear you've passed a Local Option Bill in your House?" Smith said, "Yes." "Ah," said Salisbury, "I suppose they count on a good drunken majority in the House of Lords to throw it

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out." I was placed between Leighton and Paget, and next but one to Goschen. The sheep were parted from the goats, Unionists and Separatists each in their own group. I ate four dishes only, and was able to look fearlessly in the face of my severe medico (Clarke), who sat opposite to me. There were forty covers, but though so many were present there was not much noise. A band played delightful music in an adjoining room, and I should have liked nothing better than to sit without talking —enjoying the spectacle, the glittering silver and glowing gold, the superb flowers and fruit, the colour of ribands, stars, and orders, and the general presence of fame, distinction, greatness of place and power about one. The King of the Belgians sent for me and talked about the Soudan, Universal Suffrage, and other matters, good-natured, free from stiffness, spoke well to the point, and with no sign of cloven hoof. Hatzfeldt introduced himself to me, the German ambassador; a rather barbaric look about him, made one think of Tacitus's *Germany*, and rude folk camping on the banks of Rhine or Elbe in dark forests. By and by, he presented me to Tornelli, the Italian ambassador—a grave, clever-looking man, with erect hair and alert, firm eye. About 11, I think, we broke up.

Among other things, I enjoyed some after-dinner banter with Goschen. "You and I," he said, "always used to agree in diagnosis. Don't you think I was right?" *J. M.* "Well, I see a hundred quackeries in front of us; but they will be found out and will pass away." *G.* "We've both of us been a little demoralised, even you have been demoralised." *J. M.* "Oh yes; but not very much so far." *G.* (Herschell had joined us). "The time will come when we shall have to intervene to protect Morley against his own men." *J. M.* "We'll form a party of order, like Cicero's *boni*, and all go down together —the submerged tenth." Spencer walked home

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with me. I found quick slumber, in the humour of Horace's man, who one day talked mighty business with kings and tetrarchs, and the next day blessed heaven for a modest home, with a table on three legs, only a shell for salt-cellar, and clothes of ever such coarse stuff, but all that was wanted to keep the cold away.

I

In the summer (1891) I had the refreshment of three delightful months at Overstrand on the coast of Norfolk. Our new house was spacious, standing open to sky and sea, with a fine piece of meadow-land between us and the water, and excellent quarters for servants, who have well earned air and space after the dingy inferno of a London basement. I started with the feel that the turmoil of the winter and spring had left my mind barren and inelastic. It seemed as if vacancy had possessed it far too long, though vacancy is barely the right word for a raging hurricane. We had charming neighbours. The elements went on gloriously, and much helped the blessing of finding one's self alive and full of spring.

I had occasional visits from political confederates, like Spencer, Fowler, Acland, keeping one in touch with live issues and active personalities. A public man can never safely break them off, and least of all if a change of Government should happen to be at hand. My correspondence with Harcourt never ceased, and lost none of its interest, force, and usefulness. I had to hunt up papers about the memorable Parnell interview, which wasted time, and left me, I confess, with an impression that I really need to recognise the cogency of the Greek saying that you should always take care to treat a friend as though he might one day be your enemy. The other side of this saying, oddly enough, comes easily to me by a turn of natural temperament. Invitations and arrangements for public meetings

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brought moments of perplexity, and so did the further relevant questions, what one would find to say, and what it would be good for other people to hear. I broke off the even tenor of my days on two sojourns with Mr. Gladstone, who was our neighbour at Lowestoft, stricken by sore family anxieties. I went twice to London to meet foreign personages.

July 9, '91.—Lunched at Londonderry House: a very brilliant affair; not fewer than fifty guests. Along with others, I was presented to the German Emperor; he bowed and shook hands, asked if I had recovered from my illness, and said they had influenza in Germany, and there my intercourse with him ended. But I was immensely interested in watching a man with such a part to play in Europe. He is rather short; pale, but sunburnt; carries himself well; walks into the room with the stiff stride of the Prussian soldier; speaks with a good deal of intense and energetic gesture, not like a Frenchman, but staccato; his voice strong but pleasant; his eye bright, clear, and full; mouth resolute; the cast of face grave or almost stern in repose, but as he sat between those two pretty women, the hostess and Lady ——, he lighted up with gaiety, and a genial laugh. Energy, rapidity, restlessness in every movement, from his short, quick inclinations of the head to the planting of the foot. But I should be disposed strongly to doubt whether it is all sound, steady, and the result of a —what Herbert Spencer would call—rightly co-ordinated organisation. Balfour, Lecky, and I walked last into the room, B. and I exchanging a word or two about Castlereagh, as was natural under that roof. "The more I study the matter," said I, "the more do I feel that time makes Castlereagh bigger and Canning less." I think he leaned the same way. The meal was sumptuous; the music not too loud; each table with a little mountain of roses, all pink here and deep rose there, and so forth. Diary, 1891.

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Coffee and cigarettes in the fine gallery. We did not disperse until nearly four.

Harcourt and I walked away together to Brook Street, where I stayed for half an hour. He gave me lively pleasure by telling me of the language that Mr. G. had used about me when Harcourt saw him on Tuesday. "Mr. G. said he had made up his mind, after a fortnight of office together, that he had found a new friend; and then he went on to talk of you in a way which I do wish you could have heard, it was most touching." As it happened, on the other hand, I had a letter from Mr. Gladstone (July 11) with this in a postscript: "I could wish that you had heard Harcourt speak of you, when I saw him on my last morning in London." Nothing could have pleased me more on this occasion than Harcourt's reply to a remark of mine. "All this clatter about the P. of W. and the baccarat, which no doubt raises some curious points in manners and in ethics, is beginning to make me sick. I really think of taking his part." "That's just like you," he said. I am not ashamed of my pleasure as I record all this. It is no weak flattery of self-love. On the contrary, encouragement of this kind is good for strength. It warms a man to rise above himself, and I have often thought that diffidence gives more trouble in public life than conceit.

Admirable letter from Mr. G.

Read Beaumont's little notice of Tocqueville (2½ hours). Most agreeable, but not exactly indicating any wealth of mind. Before going to bed read the chapter on Benedict Arnold's Treason in Fiske's new history of the American Revolution. Well told, and I must agree with Fiske that it is hard to see why André should have been brought into Westminster Abbey.

After breakfast, rushed into my study; jotted down some good thoughts that had come into my

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mind about Bright, whose statue I am to unveil one of these days. Looked up the pathetic passage in the *Agamemnon* about the desolation of Menelaus and his halls after the flight of Helen, and found from Milman's graceful rendering that there is an alternative version of ἄτιμος ἀλλ' ἀλοίδορος. Learnt some lines from the *Supplices* about the burial of the conquered.

Pelham, of Trinity, gave me an interesting account of Mommsen, whom he knows well. A man of inexhaustible energy; at Oxford rose at 7; got to work by special arrangement in the Bodleian; breakfast at 9.30; back from 10 or so to 3; then a walk; then another hour at Bodley; then dinner and endless talk until 2 A.M. Has fifteen children! P. is busy on a history of the Roman Empire. Full of enthusiasm (shared by Mommsen) for Gibbon; his scent for the exact value of an authority quite unerring. P. complained of the bad effect of lecturing upon a man's book style, and I am disposed thoroughly to agree, though Maine in England, and three or four Frenchmen, like Villemain, Cousin, Guizot, Renan above all, point the other way.

The merest sketch composed to divert the leisure of a combatant *jam rude donatus* would be superficial if it were to recall only a man's activities and to leave out his moods. The diarist who dwells too long or makes too much of his hours of various, casual, and unconnected musing will be luckier than he deserves if he escapes the Morbid. It amuses me to run the risk. The result is far from remarkable either for depth or originality, but the diarist here made up for his own shortcomings, and fortified and entertained himself by keeping the best literary company. I have often myself said, though I am commonly a man of good though pretty serious spirits, that "low spirits" are what we call the mood in which we see things as they are. I know

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that d'Alembert has somewhere said something of the same sort. Lo, here is Byron :

> The glance
> Of Melancholy is a fearful gift;
> What is it but the telescope of truth
> Which strips the distance of its fantasies
> And brings life near in utter nakedness,
> Making the cold reality too real ?

Swift deserved his own account of himself in the terrible epitaph at St. Patrick's : " Abi viator, et imitare si poteris strenuum pro virili libertate vindicem." A strenuous champion of Irish liberty at least he was, and it may have been this that made him doubt the substance of human things— " How fading and insipid do all objects accost us that are not conveyed in the vehicle of delusion ! How shrunk is everything as it appears in the glass of nature. So that, if it were not for the assistance of artificial medium, false lights, refracted angles, varnish and tinsel, there would be a mighty level in the felicity and enjoyments of mortal man."

Read Butcher on the melancholy of the Greeks for an hour. A famous theme, admirably handled.

Recalled the age-worn couplet from the *Iliad* :

> *οὐ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν ὀιζυρώτερον ἀνδρὸς*
> *πάντων, ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει,*

" No more piteous breed than man, midst all the things that breathe and creep on earth."

Also the splendid lines of Menander, running to much the same effect as the saying of the poet in the *Anthology* :

> *ἡδέα μὲν γάρ σου [i.e. βίου] τὰ φύσει καλά, γαῖα, θάλασσα,*
> *ἄστρα, σεληναίης κύκλα καὶ ἠελίου,*
> *τἄλλα δὲ πάντα φόβοι τε καὶ ἄλγεα· κἤν τι πάθῃ τις*
> *ἐσθλόν, ἀμοιβαίην ἐκδέχεται Νέμεσιν.*

" Sweet before all else are things fair to thee by nature, earth, sea, stars, orbs of moon and sun ;

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all else is but fears and griefs; and even if there should come some good gift to one, Nemesis follows to balance."

Dipped into Vol. II. of F. D. Maurice's Life; confirms my old view of him — self-conscious, nebulous, *ergoteur*, but with the rare psychagogic gift of affecting serious minds.

Read M. Arnold's "Strayed Reveller" and "Growing Old," the latter sombre enough, but terribly true, unless we resist, as Mr. G. resists.

July 27. Visit to Lowestoft.—In accordance with the telegram from Colman on Saturday, I started for Lowestoft after breakfast: a rainy, sullen day. Read newspaper on the journey. C.'s carriage met me at the station, and by 11.40 I found myself at Corton. Mrs. G. speedily appeared, and carried me upstairs, first of all into her own sitting-room. She was evidently sorely stricken and broke down a little, but was as brave as could be. "It's seeing you for the first time," the poor soul said. (Her eldest son had just died under a fatal operation.) Then she took me in to Mr. G. He was reading a German book: History of the Church by Dr. Joseph Langen, down to Pope Leo I. I asked whether it was ill-written or well-written, for in German that distinction makes a good deal of difference to one's comfort. He said it was rather heavy, but not at all intolerable.

We very speedily came to business. To my surprise, he evidently had it in his mind that if Wisbech [an election] were followed by one or two similar events, the Government might seek some opportunity of retiring, and leaving us to carry on with the present Parliament. If so, it might be our duty to try for a few months whether we could carry on until the autumn. We had nothing to expect from the Queen but steady hostility. Then he broke out pretty strongly about the Gordon affair; how she had sent three open telegrams at

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the fall of Khartoum, to himself, Hartington, and Granville, full of strong language. When he expressed his dissatisfaction at such a proceeding, the Q. actually—worse than the original offence—fell back on the plea that the P.O. were sworn to secrecy. Yet it was her invariable practice to use cipher—which shows that the plea was not real. Then her letter to Miss Gordon (as to which he had once told me at Hawarden). On that he had resolved never to set foot in Windsor Castle again; but the Q. had been bound to make him some acknowledgment as to his conduct to the Prince of Wales (I presume about royal grants), and so he regarded the incident as at an end. With the Prince of Wales he felt confident we should have no sort of difficulty. Mr. G. had once told Parnell that he was sure the P. of W. was not at all unfriendly to Ireland, and would interpose no obstacles.

After this digression he reverted to our last conversation about Ireland and H. R. and the postponement of the Bill for a couple of years, until we had found out what the Land Act demanded; how the financial relations really stand; and whether we can count upon the full and firm acceptance of our plan by the Nationalist party in its substantial entirety.

On the last point I said that I should say nothing until Dillon was out of prison, and until I had heard from him as to finance (their party finance), and, more important, as to their attitude towards the priests. "Well," said he, "the first proposition to impress upon him is that without their acceptance and complete co-operation we could not go on with any plan."

About land, I made a good many objections—so obvious that I cannot suppose them to have escaped him: *e.g.* our party, I said, would be frantic if they once more found themselves in the

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Serbonian bog of the Land Question; we should have all the old difficulties with our Radicals, if we opened the purchase settlement at any point, and so on. His only answer was that as Balfour had impounded the sums voted by Parliament in certain contingencies, this would affect the general system of the finance between the two countries, in case of a general political settlement.

Mr. G. paid tribute to Freeman, as the first of all and strongest of all to stamp the Turkish question; while Lord Stratford and Palmerston and everybody else were declaiming about Turkey reforming herself, and the rest of it, he never abated from his view that Turkish reform was hopeless and impossible.

After lunch, walked about the lawns and the strawberry beds with Mr. G. Told him about the German Emperor and the Prince of Naples, and some of my fine doings. He was not much interested. After tea I bade them good-bye. He was very affectionate as usual, and I was delighted to see how vigorous and keen he was. A man to be looking at 81½ to his fourth premiership, and to speak of postponing his great measure of policy for a couple of years! Reached Cromer about 8, and walked home in the low evening light which is dear to my soul. The day had been wild, wet, and stormy, and the sky was leaden grey, with bars of red flaming across masses of cloud.

Some talk by the way, about Millais touching up the portrait of Mr. G. where he is taken with his grandson. "It seems," he said to me, "as if it were symbolical, myself and my grandson, with the grievous gap of one generation gone."

August 6.—Fine N.E. wind and the sea glorious in the sun. Became wild and wintry after sundown. Out for five hours—sometimes pondering speech, but mostly content to enjoy sky and water. Sauntered about a good deal. Chat with Cyril F.

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and Tree, the actor. A very pleasant fellow. Said he learnt his part with immense labour, while his wife, on the contrary, had no trouble; if she put the book under her pillow, she seemed to know her lines when she awoke. Began Froude's *Erasmus*. Readable as a novel, yet a cynical taste about it. No sincere historic sense—no depth of faith in any principle—cynical at bottom and misleading. One ought not to idealise in biography; not overmuch at any rate. But cheap satirical realism of this sort is falser than even over-idealism. I don't see how these lectures can do young men any good. The question, however, is no longer active. Poor Froude will lecture no more. He was the easiest of companions at table or in a walk, fond of truth in his own way, but too ready to snatch her by the hair of the head, and to think the quarrel between Protestant and Catholic the only thing in the universe that matters.

After tea, idled half an hour over correspondence of Madame du Deffand with the Duchesse de Choiseul. Polished, yet playful, affectionate and quite natural. To be polished without affectation no common gift. "Qu'on serait heureux de pouvoir se passer des choses dont on ne soucie pas"—"How happy to be able to do without the things you don't care for!"—Madame du Maine. And this, after a tiresome party, "Dread of ennui makes me fling myself into water for fear of the rain." So the social world remains the same.

Being lazy, contented myself with learning old odes once more, and the passage from Lucretius, *de formidine divom*.

Then sat on the lawn and read Mill's admirable chapter in *Representative Government*, on the Ideally Best Polity; so manly in spirit, so sure in the progress of the argument, so inexpugnable in its foundation.

Past and Present — 1½ hours. Very just de-

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nunciation: Carlyle's praise of work, another way of expressing Mill's exaltation of the active type of character. But Carlyle is moral exhortation, Mill's is rational exposition and examination. Each good in its way.

July 17.—Two gentlemen called to beg me to make a speech at Lowestoft, where the Tories are bringing Balfour. Gave a provisional sort of assent. Learnt some English lines for a change, including M. Arnold's *Dover Beach*—an exquisite piece of pensive music it is. Read H. Spencer on *Justice* —between three and four hours. Somehow or other I feel profoundly dissatisfied. Must try to put my finger on the flaw. Delicious walk in the afternoon; no great scenery, no views, but all gloriously pleasant; rich meadows, with fine clumps of wood interspersed; fragrant hedges; cottage gardens ablaze with bright colours and well overhung with roses. Very hot, but when I emerged from the grand wood by Northrepps Cottage, was met by cool breeze from the sea.

Tea with —— (Labour M.P.). A tremendous egotist; not once in the hour and half we were together did he put one single question, or invite a single remark even on political business in hand, or admit a single doubt, or allow that there may be two sides to any question, or realise that he does not know all that is worth knowing. All honest, simple, concentrated and dogmatical egotism. The rough unhewn substance of English character, and very good substance, too, if well treated, and capable of very effective finish if lucky enough to get a chance of it.

In the evening read again Caroline Fox's Journal —especially the part about Mill. It was like visiting the scenes of one's childhood, and friends of whom one has for long lost sight. Interesting, exciting, and at the same time soothing, to find myself once more in this luminous atmosphere of abstract

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questions and disinterested answer, of curiosity about deep problems and detachment as to solutions and persons. Yet abundant sociability, affection, and genial friendliness. Well might Voltaire in his memorable visit to England (1726) fix upon the Quakers for his admiration and even reverence, not a common mood with him. Learnt fifty lines from Lucretius. Took me just about half an hour. I can mend this before long. A glorious morning. Feel as if the process of mental renovation would now soon begin.

Drove with H. Fowler, first to Wolterton, the great house built by old Horace Walpole. The present Lord Orford left it because his father had willed away some of its treasures. It has now been derelict for some thirty years, and a most desolate appearance it has; ragged woods, broken fences, rush-grown lawns. Very ugly at the best, I should say. Then on to Blickling, where all is just the opposite; a beautiful dream of a red Jacobean house in perfect order; the gardens a blaze of superb colour. I remember being there years ago with a large party, of whom poor M. Arnold was one, but it was then winter, and looked dank. To-day glorious. Lady —— gave us lunch and showed us the house. She was gentle and agreeable as possible; an exquisite type. We got back to the Overstrand Church; looked at the grave of Buxton, the emancipator of the slaves; and then parted, after a really enjoyable and friendly day.

Learnt Catullus's old pretty lines on the death of his mistress's bird. Speech slowly growing in my head. Sundry invitations to luncheon and dinner in London; very happy to find myself here instead.

Again, read Carlyle's *Past and Present* and Spencer's new book on *Justice*. Fine and penetrating passage in the former as to the laming of a man as he goes into fight, by the sudden vision

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to him in the heavens of some old sin. A piercing truth.[1]

Spencer very thin in matter and rather thick in manner. His argument about Women possibly true in conclusion, but vastly inadequate to persuade. Spencer seems content to draw a conclusion deductively from some premiss, generally a pretty arbitrary one—and to neglect all that may be said against it from other premisses. Huxley's wicked jest that tragedy for Spencer was a deduction killed by a fact.

Began by fifty lines of Lucretius. Then read about half of Bain's book on the elder Mill. Read diligently at Mill on Rep. Government. Reflected on the new aspect of many of the infirmities and difficulties of Rep. Government since Mill's book. Could write a useful article upon it. There are some books which cannot be adequately reviewed for twenty or thirty years after they come out. Is this true of all really important books? Read a good piece of *Past and Present*: too much of it and excess of iteration; but what energy, what inexhaustible vigour, what incomparable humour, what substantial justice of insight, and what sublimity of phrase and image (*e.g.* in the passage about Columbus). Walked on the cliff to the old tower, and sat among the tombstones, which rather agreed with my moment's humour. Learnt Shelley's Stanzas in Dejection, pretty swiftly. Recalled the summer thirty years ago, when I first began to love poetry, and used to wander alone in the green fields and lanes round Twickenham, full of Shelley and Wordsworth. This piece was a special favourite—though God knows what reason I had for dejection at two-and-twenty, with plenty of "hope and health and love and leisure," and good things within my grasp, if I had only been bold enough to know it.

[1] Bk. II. chap. xiv.

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Went in the afternoon to call on Mr. ——, a fine old English squire of the most refined type, with a good wife, who told me with pleasant scorn they were not going to turn Tories at their age. What a difference it would make to the world, whether good or bad, if more people held political opinions, their voting habits of Red and Blue, on this self-indulgent tenure.

Splendid morning. Read Horace's epistle to Tibullus.

> Qui sapere et fari possit quae sentiat, et cui
> Gratia, fama, valetudo contingat abunde,
> Et mundus victus, non deficiente crumena ?

In this delicious kind of writing Horace never has been, and I should expect never can be, equalled. An English version by Conington, my old Oxford professor, is better than none for anybody whose Latin has left him. What could one wish more

> Than friends, good books, and health without a let,
> A shrewd clear head, a tongue to speak his mind,
> A seemly household, and a purse well-lined ?

How admirable are Chatham's letters to his nephew. Glad to be reminded by him of Horace's sensible lines :

> Et ni
> Posces ante diem librum cum lumine, si non
> Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,
> Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere.
>
> Unless you light your lamp ere dawn and read
> Some wholesome book that high resolves may breed,
> You'll find your sleep go from you, and will toss
> Upon your pillow, envious, lovesick, cross.

Unwisely I did not deny myself the morbid pleasure of reading an occasional leading article. One week it appears that the *Spectator* says my position is unique, but the least enviable of any politician's in the world, because my word is decisive with the Irish for a minimum, but impotent

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for bringing down their maximum. They will use me to raise their demand, but will throw me over if I try to lower it. They suppose I hold the key so far as the Cabinet is concerned. "May he never live to repent that he ever plunged into that yellow swirling stream." I hope not, and, what is more, I firmly believe not. "For me at least," wrote Mr. G., "there is no option." Aug. 22, 1891.

Finished Mill's Essay on Civilisation, which is now in much of it quite out of date: the tone too disparaging, but possibly the influence of the very essay itself is what has now helped to falsify it.

Afterwards the Essay on Armand Carrel, which has many admirable sentences. Particularly excellent a page where he distinguishes the practical man from the thinker, who is not called to measure himself with realities. And that other page where he describes the impression made upon him by Godefroi Cavaignac. It is a picture of many of us at that time, so I copy it. "His notion of duty is that of a Stoic; he conceives it as something quite infinite, and having nothing whatever to do with happiness, something immeasurably above it; a kind of half Manichean in his views of the universe. According to him, man's life consists of one perennial and intense struggle against the principle of evil, which but for that struggle would wholly overwhelm him. Generation after generation carries on this battle, with little success as yet. He believes in perfectibility and progressiveness, but thinks that hitherto progress has consisted only in removing some of the impediments to good, not in realising the good itself; that, nevertheless, the only satisfaction which man can realise for himself is in battling with this evil principle and overpowering it; that after evils have accumulated for centuries, there sometimes comes one great clearing off, one day of reckoning called a revolution" (*Dissertations and Discussions*, i. 266 *n.*).

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Read *All's Well that Ends Well.* Found the opening scenes very tiresome—euphuistic and pointless. Thought of Byron's saying to Moore—"I say, Moore, what do you think of Shakespeare? I think it's d——d humbug." But one soon hears the glorious note, *e.g.* "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together," etc. etc. And how good is the little short speech put into the mouth of Parolles, when his cowardice and baseness have just been exposed. Diderot or Browning would have seized the point of such a character. And "why did the devil move me to undertake the recovery of their drum?"—a line that may often recur to some of us within the next two or three years.

Wrote letter to Dillon to greet him on coming out of Galway Gaol.

Read *Measure for Measure.* No bad way of spending a vacant forenoon — a forenoon made vacant by mental inertness, not by want of occupation, for why should I not tackle my report of the Irish Society Committee? 'Tis a strange play for the seventeenth century. I wonder if Goethe ever said anything about it. He would have seen its ironic depths. I turned to Hazlitt's remarks on it: poor, thin, and superficial: only sees that there is no character to whom we have not an antipathy. For my part I have sympathy at any rate with the duke. S. Brooke, often so admirable, misses the point dreadfully.

Learnt some lines of Sophocles about the wheel of fortune, comparing our destinies to the vicissitudes of the moon (*Fragments*, 713):

πρόσωπα καλλύνουσα καὶ πληρουμένη,
χὥτανπερ αὐτῆς εὐγενεστάτη φάνῃ
πάλιν διαρρεῖ, κἀπὶ μηδὲν ἔρχεται.

But my fate, on some throbbing wheel of God,
Alway must rise or fall, and change its being;

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As the Moon's image never two nights long
May in one station rest; out of the dark
The young face grows, still lovelier, still more perfect,
Then, at the noblest of her shining, back
She melts and comes again to nothingness.

GILBERT MURRAY.

Read some of Newman's Sermons. Not in the right humour for them. Then wound up in the drowsy hour with Tom Moore's Letters.

I once had some talk with Mr. Gladstone on all this. We spoke of the new Shakespeare coming out. I said I'd been taking the opportunity of reading Vol. I. and should go over it all in successive volumes. He was rather shocked at my too crude opinion against *Merry Wives*. "What, you don't like Falstaff?" "I like him in *Henry IV.*, but not in the clothes basket." "Why, Falstaff is one of the most wonderful things in literature." Full of interest in *Hamlet*, and enthusiasm for it—comes closer than any other play to some of the strangest secrets of human nature. What *is* the key to the mysterious hold of this play on the world's mind? I trotted out my favourite proposition that *Measure for Measure* is one of the most modern of all the plays: the profound analysis of Angelo, the strange figure of the duke, the deep irony of our modern time in it all. But I do not think he well knew what I meant. He is too healthy, too objective, too simple for all the complexities of morbid analysis, and knows not the very rudiment of *Weltschmerz*.

August 1, '91.—At 12.30 started for London. Wasted the time of my journey over a smart but not really very good sort of book, commended to me by ——: *An American Girl*.

Arrived in London an hour late, but was in time to meet the deputation from Rochdale, asking me to unveil the Bright statue. They had only invited Mr. Gladstone before me, and if I declined, they would go next to the Duke of Argyll, and after him

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to Hartington. The deputation included a leading Tory. I said I would let them know on Tuesday, and I then wrote to Mr. G. on the subject—whether it would look very well to laud the wisdom and virtue of a man whose convictions were against us in the great battle of the hour.

T. Fowler of Corpus and I dined at Club together. Very interesting talk about the current drift of things in Oxford. How the Anglicans were trying to capture science, criticism, philosophy, and the new social spirit. Told me about *Lux Mundi*—the famous attempt to reconcile Anglicanism *alias* Catholicism with the most advanced Biblical criticism. Dangers of this: *e.g.* they admit David did not write the Psalms; but then Christ, quoting from Psalms, introduces the passage "as David saith." Did he not know that David did not say it? This difficulty leads to the perilous doctrine of κένωσις that Christ divested himself of certain divine attributes, including Omniscience. Fowler assigns the beginning of this movement to T. H. Green, and the revival in his teaching of Transcendental Philosophy. To-day, at Oxford, 'tis as much as your life is worth to mention Experience or Association.

August 9, '91.—Read the parabasis in the *Birds*; the description of Calypso's island; and the ever lovely lament for Hector. Read Mill's article on Claims of Labour. Strong bias towards what is called Socialism. Query, does this bent, which his father would have so much disliked, fit in with the drift at the same time towards a sort of Theism? Modern Socialism undoubtedly leads back towards the old teachings of the Church, which were essentially an elevation of the communistic spirit. Pity instead of effort, meditation instead of struggle, poverty instead of laying up riches, self-sacrifice instead of energetic pushing—in all these things the modern Socialist in his reaction against the Econo-

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mist finds himself near neighbour to the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, and even to the monk.

Read Newman—two sermons: "The Spiritual Mind" and "Secret Faults." The texture not quite so close as I had thought or expected.

Mrs. F—— the other day copied out for me the two texts of which I had heard at the time in poor M. Arnold's Diary. He used to preface each week (I think) with a text or saying. He died on a certain Sunday, and that very morning, he being then in his usual health and spirits, had written this (from Ecclesiasticus):

April 15.—Weep bitterly over the dead as he is worthy, and then comfort thyself: drive heaviness away; thou shalt not do him good, but hurt thyself.

April 22.—When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest, and be comforted for him, when his spirit is departed from him.

After dinner a couple of hours more on the new edition of Machiavelli. I remember some years ago that Maine said a serious study of Machiavelli was well worth doing. So it is, and Acton's preface supplies the text, and a profoundly interesting theme it is. But one would have to resign one's seat in Parliament first, I fancy. No democracy of our times could stand the examination of the theoretic truth in Machiavelli, though they would not, and do not, shirk taking it quietly for gospel in daily practice—or at any rate in practice at a pinch. But you must not mention it, if you would be an *ἀνθρωπάρεσκος* or man-pleaser. Acton's introduction, as I said to Mr. G., is as hard reading as a corrupt bit in Thucydides. French, German, Italian, Latin, Spanish, etc. etc., all in a single page —citation after citation—no grouping; you never know where you are, nor what he is at. The exact opposite to Acton's style is Maine's; one all detail and over-abundant quotation, the other all

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generality and thoroughly well-digested novelty of thought.

Read *Excursion*. Stick to my wager about finding one fine line in every two pages. The last half of Book IV. is among the finest things in great poetry. It is real religion. Some saint who knows how to write, might do worse than try his hand at putting the doctrine of it in a prose reverie.

Wasted time after dinner over Schopenhauer's *Parerga*—his three classes of writer: those who write but don't think; those who think in order to write; those who think for the sake of thought, and then write. The only truly valuable man is the *Selbstdenker*. Quite true he is the most valuable man, but Gibbon, Sarpi, and some others are something.

Pondered a citation of Butler's sentence about an idle way of reading: "By this means time, even in solitude, is happily got rid of without the pain of attention; neither is any part of it more put down to idleness—one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less thought—than great part of that which is spent in reading."

I made two visits to Mr. Gladstone at Lowestoft. One of them was almost entirely devoted to Home Rule and the composition of a Cabinet, and would have been more important than it was, though not more attaching or at the moment interesting, if we could have foreseen the results of the coming election. I only carried away a curious story about Ruskin. He used to attend Mr. Gladstone's breakfasts, and at one of them the host pronounced three grand things to be done to the ways of the world by mankind. First, the introduction of more lenient and humane practice with prisoners; second, a general sentiment against war; and third, the abolition of slaves. "Yes," said Ruskin in his mild tones, "but then I don't think prisons ought to be made humane; and I'm not against slavery; and

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I'm not against war." On another occasion R. had observed in the anti-Jingo days that he (R.) ought by rights to have been in favour of the Turks and against the Bulgarians, for he was against all resistance to authority. "But then," he went on, "I must follow my great father, Carlyle."

Mr. G. could not understand how it was that Carlyle was anti-Jingo. I suggested that it was a genuine historic judgment. *Mr. G.* "But what had he to do with the Turks?" *J. M.* "Oh, in his *Frederick*, he had been brought pretty close to eastern affairs: Russia, Poland, Turkey."

In September I had paid a day's visit to J. A. Bright at Rochdale, and I begged him to take me to see his father's grave in the yard attached to the Friends' Meeting House. A small place enclosed by stone wall. Grass very dingy. All made at once radiant and solemn by a small, plain, flat stone—"John Bright, died . . . 1889. Aged 77 years." Not many other stones. Went into the meeting-house, where we may suppose him to have had his life's inmost counsels. In October I fulfilled my promise to unveil his statue, which I did with right goodwill. Started betimes for Rochdale, where I arrived for lunch. Left thick fog behind me, and found glorious sunshine. Pleasant luncheon, and then to the ceremony: a huge crowd. I only delivered one monumental sentence, and then drew the cord and unveiled the statue. I think it a good piece of work, though I like marble better than bronze. Thence we proceeded into the Town Hall, where I delivered my address—with good effect. John Albert B. scribbled a friendly word in pencil on a card, and they listened as I could wish.

Before the meeting was over, I made my escape; found myself at Manchester by 6; got my luggage and a bite of dinner, and at 7 started for Lytham. At Lytham I spent the Sunday with my sister, in rich autumnal sunshine. At night went with her to

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the church among the trees by the seashore where my parents lie. Interesting sermon. The pulpit is now social, as the platform is, too often just as party and political in the worst sense. Never so bad as when war is in the air, though war is Old Testament, not New.

II

Towards the end of the year a gathering took place of what Burke called the capital people, at Althorp. Rosebery and I went down together, and found Mr. Gladstone and the Harcourts standing in the hall. After dinner, we went into what I do think was the most fascinating room I ever saw in a house—great or small—one of the libraries, lined with well-bound books on white enamelled shelves, with a few, but not too many, knick-knacks lying about, and all illuminated with the soft radiance of many clusters of wax candles. A picture to remember: Spencer with his noble carriage and fine red beard; Mr. G. seated on a low stool, discoursing as usual, playful, keen, versatile; Rosebery, saying little, but now and then launching a pleasant *mot*; Harcourt cheery, expansive, witty. Like a scene from one of Dizzy's novels, and all the actors, men with parts to play.

On retiring, Mr. G. took me to his room; gave me two or three personal letters to read; then about quarter of an hour *de rebus hibernicis*: and so off to my bed.

December 8.—Mr. G. and I first down to breakfast. Rosebery announced his intention of going off at once, but Mr. G. followed him out of the room, and persuaded him to stay for our council. We met in the famous room where all the sovereign treasures of the bibliomaniac are [were]—the Caxtons, the Mazarin Bible, the Mainz Psalter; prizes acquired by an ancestor from funds procured by sale of land

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from Wimbledon to Hyde Park Corner, a perfect mine of diamonds and gold then unworked by inhabitants and builders. Rosebery took up a book and turned it sedulously over, only interjecting a dry word now and then. Harcourt not diffuse.

We talked about Egypt, agreeing in the conclusion that we could decide on nothing until we had conducted an examination with official means at our disposal. Second, that we bring in bills next session. Catholic Disabilities to be taken up, if possible, by a Catholic peer—probably the D. of Norfolk. Registration—to be balloted for. Then we came to Ireland, H. R., and the other ingredients in that awkward dish. Mr. G., when he likes, really quite incomparable. The true crux, it seemed, was the Irish peers; what was to be the *solatium victis*? Some of us tried, not altogether irrelevantly, as we thought, to stray a little into the question of the Irish members in House of Commons, and on what terms they are to remain at Westminster. Spencer rather leaned to Harcourt's view, that they must all remain for all purposes. "But you don't say what you are going to do with the Irish peers!" I perceived well enough what this meant, and so did we all, and we filed off to an early luncheon.

Two or three people to dinner: hunters. Spencer wore his red coat as Master of the Hounds, and most picturesque he looked. A gay, agreeable evening.

December 9.—Spencer came into my room betimes in his pink, to return letters and say goodbye. He was off for a fourteen-mile drive to the meet, and the rain pouring. I envied such capacity for free enjoyment. Pleasant gossip at breakfast. On leaving, Mr. G. put into my hands what he called his "puzzle"—an expedient for Irish representation which will assuredly need rumination enough—a puzzle with a vengeance. Told me to keep it to myself.

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So ended a pleasant, and what from outside had all the look of an important visit; not from anything done, but from the fact that we five had been got together, and had sat down together for what passed as deliberation. Caxtons, Mazarin Bibles, Mainz Psalters have now gone to a northern city—symbol of the dismantling of territorial power all over England. The men are gone save two, and can meet no more. The puzzle remains.

III

I may as well put here two notes of conversations with Chamberlain, one at a dinner at Marlborough House in 1892, and the other on the terrace of the House of Commons two years later.

Marlborough House

Rosebery and Chamberlain, talking together, beckoned me to join them. They were discussing the disruption of Cabinet in 1886. C. said that when he went into the Cabinet that morning he had no notion of breaking away, but that Mr. G., on the contrary, had gone into it that morning with his mind made up to drive C. out. Rosebery shared C.'s impression. They wished to know mine. I said mine was much the same. Harcourt and I walked away from that disastrous Cabinet. Afterwards C. and I had a good deal of talk, on a very easy and amicable footing. He wondered why on earth we had quarrelled with Parnell. What affair was his private conduct of ours? I told him our case shortly in its unanswerable strength, and he listened with his habitual look in such talks of candid attention. How he was affected I never knew, for the Prince came up, and in his genial way with pleasant words about an *entente* between us two, and then took me to the Austrian archduke [whose murder at Sarajevo was one day to set the world on fire]—a civil, pleasant young fellow. Odd that he should know no English, having travelled and shot in India and other parts of our dominions, and having come here on purpose to thank the Queen for his good treatment.

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At the House of Commons

Chamberlain told me that he quaked when Rosebery was made P.M., lest he should fling H. R. overboard, the effect of which would surely have been to attract masses of Liberal Unionists to the flag of their old party. After R. made his first speech about the predominant partner in the H. of L., he refused an invitation to follow R. at Edinburgh. But when he read the Edinburgh speech, he at once wired to that city that he would come down instantly.

The Liberal party would not come together again in full life and force until some leader arose, boldly throwing over H. R. Thought our tactics after 1893 lamentable. We ought to have defied our sections to do their worst. Asked me whether it was true that I had gone for Rosebery in preference to Harcourt for P.M. I said yes, but as I could not put the grounds of my preference in all their strength, the topic dropped. I fancy, however, that he thought it a mistake. . . . Very amicable; quite loth, he was, to part. Wished me a pleasant dinner where I was going.

H. of C.—Long talk with Harcourt in his room. Went over with him my talk of last Thursday with J. C. The most interesting part of it was the recollections of 1885–86. Blamed himself for agreeing to turn out the Government in January '86. J. C., however, was keen for it: no doubt J. C. saw that, unless he accepted Coercion, there was no alternative; and how could he accept it after his line in the Cabinet? In any case a split in the Liberal party was inevitable, for Hartington and his men would have voted for the Government (as indeed they did on the Collings amendment).

"The Round Table would have kept Chamberlain, and we should have saved the party, but for you two chaps quarrelling with one another. It was his irritation at something said in a speech by you that led to the fatal *Baptist* letter. The night we all dined at G. O. T.'s, things were on the eve of settlement."

The last sentence I thought then and always no better than moonshine. A settlement on a foolscap sheet, independent of facts of local circumstance and feeling, and will and passion and finance, and other appurtenances of human nature.

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CHAPTER IX

PARIS

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1892.

In December 1891, Mr. Armitstead invited me to accompany Mr. Gladstone and some of his family to Biarritz, where I spent Christmas. Of this most enjoyable expedition I have said enough elsewhere long ago. Mr. Armitstead and his party went from Pau to Carcassonne, Arles, Nîmes, and so round to the Riviera, while I found my way to Paris, so well known to me for thirty years. On the first morning (January 13, 1892), Jusserand, the best of friends, called in very lively spirits, and planned various pleasures for me, beginning with a visit to the Louvre then and there. It was delightful to find oneself walking once more through the well-known streets and gardens in the crisp bright air, with a companion as bright as the air. At the Louvre he carried me off to see the newly acquired figure of the winged Victory of the ship's prow found at Samothrace. She has no head, but the vigour and freedom of limb and pose, and the natural power of the wing, are admirable. Then to some remarkable Assyrian frescoes, of glazed tile or brick—extraordinary force in the stamp or stride of the bull, and extraordinary delicacy in the colouring and decorative adornment. Lastly, through the *salon carré* to a new room of modern French paintings. Among them I noticed the well-known *Source* of Ingres, a beautiful thing; also the first of his pictures that made a mark, *Oedipus and Sphinx*: the face of

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Oedipus masterly in every aspect and the composition full of talent. A superb cattle-piece by Troyon. Lastly, but most delightful to me of all, because I have long lived with the engraving of it in our small dining-room, Millet's *Gleaners*. I felt as if it were worth while to go to Paris if only for the sake of seeing a picture that so moves one by the wonderful harmony of its composition, as well as by its fidelity to the sore, hard life of the fields.

Jusserand had now to be off to his work at the Foreign Office. I lounged about on the boulevards, looked over books at Levy's, bought an English copy of the *Taming of the Shrew*, and told the people at the hotel to get me a stall at the Français for the performance of the same in the evening. I fell to reading my play with much ease and contentment, occasionally dropping into a doze, which Shakespeare's benign shade would have been the first to pardon in a man who had been in the train all night. Then to the play. On the whole I should say it was more interesting to an Englishman than enjoyable, but interesting assuredly it was, to see a piece that rejoiced the rough old England of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so re-dressed as to be very decent Molière, and to win hearty and genuine applause from so trained an audience. I did not much admire the Katharina, but Coquelin as Petruchio with his incomparable voice was first-rate. I took the usual saunter through the familiar foyer, and felt like one come back to old friends as I looked on the busts of Voltaire, George Sand, Sedaine, and all the rest of the people who were once so much to me.

Thursday, Jan. 14.—A busy day admirably well filled. Sallied forth with Jusserand to the Musée Carnavalet—the exhibition of interesting mementoes of Parisian history, from antediluvian bones and prehistoric coffins and implements, down to red caps of liberty, revolutionary pikes, and placards put up in

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places of resort to inform the world that in this room one honours oneself with the name of citizen. The house was once the hotel of Madame de Sévigné, and many of her letters are dated from it. At my request we went to a homely restaurant on the quays. For the first time in my life I saw frogs in the bill of fare, but I resisted the dainty, and limited my curiosity to a cutlet of the young boar, as tough as tough could be; I did well enough on oysters. From this to the Chamber, which for an hour was painfully dull. However, I was rewarded by hearing Floquet return thanks to them for having once more chosen him President. He read every word from written pages, held valiantly in his hand; his voice is good, and his delivery firm and sonorous. In substance it was marked by the same promise of justice and amelioration of social condition that Europe has lived upon since 1848.

I went to call on Taine. It was his wife's day at home. The only other interesting person was Leroy-Beaulieu, brother of the economist, and himself author of the excellent and elaborate book on Russia. In his book he pays Western civilisation the compliment of speaking up for a constitution for Russia. In his conversation to-day he took a different tone, and would not say that he thought a constitution a promising or even a possible experiment. Taine, as usual, very despondent about France and democracy. I hinted delicately and respectfully, as I well might, that he was too fastidious, as the man of letters is to be excused for being; that the wise politician does not believe that every problem has a solution; that politics are a second best; that you must not expect too much virtue or wisdom from man, though both wisdom and virtue are his; and finally, that when you have inspected all the vices and shortcomings of parliamentary government through the strongest magnifying-glass that any critic or doctrinaire can

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construct, parliamentary government is still better for a Western society than the best despot that ever was known, not excepting—if he would permit me to mention them—the Napoleon of Waterloo and the Napoleon of Sedan. In this he did not differ. If so, what is the use, and what is the manliness, of shivering about democracy, like Taine, Scherer, Maine, Lecky? As Burke so gloriously said, he was aware that the age is not what we all wish, but he was sure that the only means to check its degeneracy was heartily to concur in whatever is best in our time.

Still, Taine is a serious, a modest, a reflective, philosophic man—in range of literature a great man; and he replied in a way that was exceedingly pleasant to follow. He has spent, however, twenty laborious years on his book on the origin of Contemporary France, and I cannot but fear that the first product of the application of so much talent to so vast and profound a subject, or set of subjects, will be no deep or penetrating contribution to effective thinking about either past or present.

Friday, Jan. 15.—Half inclined to shirk my excursion with Jusserand. But that faithful cicerone wisely held me to my work, and we drove off to the Luxembourg to see the exhibition of modern French sculpture. Admirable it is, most of it—and curiously free from the odious quality that stains and splashes the French literature and much of the French painting of the day. Chapuy's figure of Joan of Arc is truly admirable—real without being coarse, simple without silliness, moral dignity without pose; the very figure of a peasant girl raised to heroism by the divine voices. It is absurd in face of such a piece of work to assert that the possibilities of sculpture have passed away in modern times.

Much delighted with all this, and the good hopes which such serious work gives for the country out of

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which it comes. I went on to the F.O. to lunch with M. Ribot, the Foreign Minister. His wife is an American lady whom we have known, and known about, for years. They were both very cordial. Only Jusserand there. Ribot was in good spirits, and more free and disengaged in manner than when I saw him last year. He opened the conversation about Egypt, which I had hoped to leave out. It did not come to very much; he is sore about Lord Salisbury's Guildhall speech, and about the English press. I told him we paid little attention to such articles, and they really stood for next to nothing. The Gladstone triumph in 1880 was the classic leading case on that point since the lowering of the franchise in 1867. He said they were reproduced in the French press and inflamed French opinion—an aspect of such things that our imperialist organs are most prone of all to overlook. Asked whether —— was not rather anti-French. I extricated myself as well as I could from this delicate topic, assuring him that —— was well aware that the H. of C. must decide both foreign policy and everything else. On the whole, the talk in itself was only moderately interesting; such interest as it had was due to the place and the interlocutors.

Dressed and went with Jusserand to dine with a club of eminent men. The dinner at the Café Anglais was as good as could be, both in scheme and execution; two wines on the table, red and white. Among the company was Pailleron, the admirable author of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*—rather like William Morris the poet to look at; Mézières, an Academician, whose titles to glory I do not well know; Blignières, who used to represent France in the Dual Control in Egypt; two of the brothers Charmes; and Vicomte de Vogüé, an Academician, with a history. He sat next to me, and we had a most interesting talk all the evening—about Russia, Socialism, the Church, etc. I don't know that he

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suggested specific new ideas, but he was highly sympathetic and agreeable, and stimulated me to talk, even bringing out in me a copious vein of the French language. It was Vogüé, by the way, who stirred up Filon to write the article about me in the *Deux Mondes* a little time ago. Charmes was civil as to my speeches about Egypt. I told him that they had not been at all warmly received in England. "Ah, one can never please everybody," he said gaily. Enjoyed my evening immensely. They were men of good manners, grave, courteous, cheerful, animated—all in the very best style. Every sign both of bright talent and character. What is the secret of the power of French *esprit*? It is the close union, Renan says, that has always existed among them between those who write books and those who read and criticise them. What is the English equivalent for *esprit*? The word takes half a score of the close, full pages of Littré. Voltaire, the consummate master of the much-needed art of verbal discrimination without foppery, is driven to negatives. *Esprit* is different from genius, judgment, talent, penetration, breadth, grace, finesse, and yet it should partake of all these things. To be a *bel esprit* is one thing, to have *esprit* another. Montesquieu defines it as a dialogue ordinarily gay, in which everybody, without listening to himself too much, says something and replies, and where everything is treated in clean-cut, prompt, vivacious fashion. You only speak half your thought, leaving the rest to be divined. Without noticing, perhaps not knowing, the stupid and unmannerly question that a Frenchman in the seventeenth century is supposed to have put, but did not, whether a German can have *esprit*, Goethe (1827) dwelt in an interesting place on the supreme importance of atmosphere to a writer, like the difference made to fruit by soil, and on the advantage to France over Germany in a capital of centralised society like Paris. All this

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came into my head later. Meanwhile about 9.30 or so we broke up, and I drove with J. to the Collège de France, it being Madame Renan's evening at home. Renan was too ill to appear in the drawing-room, but she told me he would be glad to see me in his library. So we went in: a regular book-room, with ladder for high shelves; not much in the way of binding, but all in that methodical disorder, which to the eye of an expert means work, and not mere dilettantism. The old scholar, who stands for such deep changes in the mental history of his time —in one sense the most effective French influence since Voltaire—was in his chair, hardly able to move, suffering from diabolic skin trouble. No wonder, considering that the only exercise he ever takes is to walk downstairs to his lecture-room, and then upstairs back to his work-room. He does not sleep, and altogether seemed unhappy enough to please the Pope himself—the ideal end of a modern Anti-Christ. I reminded him that we had last met at Victor Hugo's, just after his return from the Holy Land, and that he had told us about the furious hatred of Greeks and Latins, the kindling of the holy fire, etc. This kindled the holy fire in Renan, and he warmed up famously as he told the whole business over again, particularly dwelling on the naïveté of the Greeks, and the *sangfroid* of the Turkish soldiers under the fanatical vituperation of the Christian zealots. Renan's face—I had often seen him—is not an attractive one, but I was vastly struck as his animation grew with the deep light and full flash of the eye, and the powerful movement of the over-hanging brows. He talked away for some twenty minutes until at last he was in downright good form. We then moved off, and he insisted on accompanying us through a couple of ante-rooms, with much bowing and mutual compliment. A mixture of amiability and power, that left me with the very pleasantest impression. He was near the end.

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Jusserand wanted me to finish up the night with half an hour at the Opera, where he had invitations for a box. But I said that I did not choose to efface the scene with Renan, and besides I had the more prosaic motive of packing. So I bade my really good, kind, and most helpful friend good-bye.

Friday, Jan. 16.—Left Paris at 11.30, snow lying all the way to Calais. Tried to read two pieces of French fiction, but found each more disgusting than the other, so I flung them both out of the window, only hoping that the French peasantry are lucky enough never to have learnt to read.

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BOOK III

THREE YEARS IN IRELAND

The Management of so complicated and mighty a Machine as the United Colonies, requires the Meekness of Moses, the Patience of Job, and the Wisdom of Solomon, added to the Valour of David.—JOHN ADAMS, 1776.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL ELECTION AND NEW GOVERNMENT

I

THE session was marked by listlessness and lassi- 1892.
tude; the only questions were when the Government would dismiss the Parliament, and whether the electors would in turn dismiss the ministers. The Parnell split had made black havoc. The Liberal leader was in his eighty-third year. Nothing had happened to favour a positive reversal of the verdict of 1886. Electoral experts on both sides did not disguise that they were at sea as to the chances.

Harcourt, by his long experience, his immense powers of debate, his grasp of the details of business, was of course, after Mr. Gladstone, the most capable for general parliamentary activity. At the end of 1890, a frank, full, and well-weighed correspondence was exchanged between him and myself on this question—how far Parnell's changed language had affected the future language and the line of our party to the British elector. Where now was an Irish party with authority on behalf of the Irish nation to accept the proposals of 1886, and to accredit itself as such an authority to the common sense of the British public? Were we to let the newly revived prejudices of the constituencies, which, observe, we believed ourselves only six weeks ago to have overcome triumphantly, sweep away all the conditions that we have been for five years proclaiming

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all over the country? Were we to let Home Rule fall into the limbo of pious opinions as Pitt, and at one time Fox, allowed the Catholic question to fall out of deference to the prejudices of the King? Was the bottom knocked out of my Leeds resolution of November 1886, which Harcourt had himself adopted as the basis of the preliminary of the Round Table? With great power and argument he made a certain case for the line of Mr. Pitt. For myself I avowed my difficulty in affecting the tactics of postponement, and declared that if we were to be beaten I should like to face the enemy, and not skulk in any ditch. Mine was the prayer of the Virgilian sailor in his hour of extremity—

> Superent quibus hoc, Neptune, dedisti!
> Extremos pudeat rediisse; hoc vincite, cives,
> Et prohibete nefas!

Conquer they to whom great Neptune wills the day; not to be last make that your aim, and triumph by averting shame.—CONINGTON.

Harcourt could be trusted in passing to forgive desperate politics for the sake of a classic quotation.

The election came in July 1892, with results as perplexing and unsatisfactory as any in the history of the House of Commons—a leader and a party bound morally and politically to undertake a task in which irresistible parliamentary force was indispensable, and that force had been denied us beyond mistake. The party majority was put at 42, but for working purposes it could not be counted much over 30, including the Irishmen. Before the Parliament came to an end the leader of the House amused himself by asking his genial whip of a morning, "Well, is the majority to-day 7, or is it 8?"

II

The views and the position of another friend and colleague became of critical importance. Lord

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Rosebery had been withdrawn from public life by a stroke of domestic bereavement, but I had the pleasure of paying him two or three visits of which, in view of after events, it may be worth while to reproduce a note.

Visit to Rosebery at Epsom: August 12-14, 1891. —I did not arrive until nearly half-past eight, so I found him already at table, where I joined him in a few minutes, and we got almost instantly on to the right footing of ease and ripened intimacy that lasted without a break until we parted a couple of days later. He seemed to have recovered his usual spirits. I had never seen him, and barely heard from him, since the day when we went together to Granville's funeral, and the change was satisfactory indeed. He is still restless, in that respect curiously disturbing to my collectedness. But he is again alert, ready, and *suivi*. His knowledge of English political history for the last hundred years is extremely full and accurate—and he has it all ready. A curious example of this arose on something which I pointed out to him in Trevelyan's *Fox*, and as to which I wrote to G. O. T. It was about Shelburne —whether S. lived within his income. G. O. T. says yes. But R. instantly produced a passage from Bentham that S. was heavily in debt. Talked about his *Pitt*, the part as to Lord Fitzwilliam's recall which I thought extremely good (Mr. Gladstone thought it extremely bad), and that as to Pitt's resignation in 1801 which I found inadequate and open to debate, as it is likely to remain for many a day to come. He had allowed himself to get into a rather petulant humour with Lecky on the point, for this is an occasional weakness of his.

Meanwhile—the upshot of our various talks as we drove, or strolled about Epsom Downs, or chatted in the library, was something of this kind:—The triple alliance (Harcourt, himself, and myself)—so

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much more really important, as I said laughing, than that of the Central Powers—to remain on its proposed footing. This second of the triumvirates to which I have been admitted is a good deal less stable and less satisfactory than the first. The present two, higher in some ways than Chamberlain and Dilke, are decidedly inferior to them in popular and political *flair*, in steady and vigilant attention, in tenacity. I pointed out Harcourt's evident push to the front this year, and the substantial strength of his claim, founded on age, parliamentary experience, parliamentary ability, and finally, active hard work for the party. R., however, does not believe that the public and the party will stand it: then when H. finds this to be so, he will give way to Spencer. *J. M.* "Yes, the character of S. is one of the best possessions of our party. But he has not, as Tennyson said of Browning, 'the glory of words.' He is not reported. They only report Harcourt, you, and me." A newspaper had drawn up a class-list, measuring men's vogue by the quantity of space given to their speeches by the leading organs. The first or verbatim class was limited to Gladstone, Salisbury, Balfour, and Chamberlain. The second, varying from verbatim to a column of summary, contained Hartington and Goschen from the Unionists, and Harcourt, Rosebery, and myself. In days of electioneering even a rushlight like this is not to be neglected. "More than that, I am bold enough to see another mission for you. Make yourself the exponent and the leader of a practicable socialism. You have abundantly shown how well you know that London ought not to be left out of Liberal account, and it will not be attacked by politics alone or first. I don't believe that so much will come of all our talk about social reform, but something will, and why should not you take care that something shall?" After this, our last talk, he drove me to

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the station, and we went up to London—with much pleasant gossip.

It was a peculiarly agreeable visit, and if conclusions were not all that one could wish, there was much of reasonably good promise. Anyhow it restored me some of my old spirit of purpose, which has been rather dilapidated this year. In our last walk in the shrubberies at the back of the house, I said—"You have often dropped a phrase, '*If* I remain in politics.' This will never do. I am certain that sense of duty, apart from other ties and motives, settles that question. Your mission is clear. We have talked about personal matters fully and freely. I consider on that head that perhaps some accident may determine when the moment arrives. Meanwhile and in any case, what is important is that the Liberal party should keep as well as it can on the high level of principle on which Mr. Gladstone has always spoken for it."

A visit in 1892. *June* 6-7. *Durdans.*—Rosebery had been opening a park in the morning, and we went down together in the afternoon to Epsom. The weather delicious. We sauntered about the garden, talking books, politics, and persons. He was uncommonly keen about it all—for a man who comforts himself in vagrant moments with the thought that he has "done with public life."

Later and after tea we had an hour's drive, and then at 8.30 we had dinner served under the verandah in the garden. Reminded me of a dinner I once had at Berchtesgaden with Chamberlain years ago. Only we had now a perfect service, instead of two German waiters attending on twenty miscellaneous people, screaming and being screamed at by an overdriven cook. After dinner we walked for an hour in the woods, the silver moon gleaming through the branches. R. a charming companion. Before going to bed, he showed me a truly deep and

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beautiful page in one of Newman's Sermons. When I can get the proper volume, I shall like to transcribe it. Among other things, he wondered how it was that members of Parliament came to see me so much, and to talk so freely to me. "They never come to me," he said. *J. M.* "You're too big a man for one thing, and for another you are uncertain—not always to be found. I am always there, you see." *R.* "Oh, that's not it. When I was in every morning at Lansdowne House, 'twas just the same. No, you are sympathetic." This comparison paid me an undeserved compliment, for nobody surpassed him in that inner humanity which is the root of good manners and good feeling and other things lying at the core of character. Odd that he should fall on this vein, at a moment when I am just emerging from a baddish fit of something disgracefully like misanthropy.

He talked about his future, as if resolved not to undertake F.O., or anything else—and as if the only question were when and how he should break it to Mr. G. I said, it would be intolerable for him to do it now; even when the time came he could never leave Mr. G. and others of us in the lurch; we had nobody else to take the place. He said Kimberley would do it well enough; able man of business, had experience of F.O. *J. M.* "If you don't take it, it must be in the House of Commons" (with emphasis). *R.* "Who says so, pray?" (with astonishment). *J. M.* "Harcourt says so, and I say so." Strong protest against this, but I stood to my guns. Drove over to have a chat with our famous friend Charles Russell; we found him walking in his fields. Thence, by the one o'clock train home. Then my activities became centred on the Tyne, not without plenty of speech-making on the banks of other streams.

On the anniversary of Waterloo!—Started at 10 P.M. for Newcastle. Article on me in the

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Spectator, mentioning among other traits a certain austerity, as of a man who had

> fixed his face
> In many a solitary place
> Against the wind and open sky.

Is this from *Peter Bell*? It recalled my old passion for the sou'-westers in anger blowing from the distant sea in Hindhead and on the Hog's Back.

Newcastle at 8.42 as usual. Remonstrated with my friends for making me open the campaign so early. Capital meeting in the Town Hall. Spoke, alas, for 70 minutes. Excellent reception. Left at 11 and to bed at *York* by 1.30.

York.—Went to morning service at the Minster: lovely music, but little edified by 40 minutes of sermon from the dean, who among many other naïvetés admitted that if he had had the ordering of things in this universe, he would have ordered them very differently. In a perfected universe deans would no doubt have had a better certainty of mitres. When the service was over rain was pouring in torrents, so I paced up and down the nave for half an hour composing my address. Completed and despatched that document to Newcastle by the evening mail: not well satisfied with it. It counts for little, however, as Mr. Gladstone will be out one day this week and that will set our tune. Dined in the window of the Coffee Room, which frames one of the most glorious pictures in any town in England. As the grey evening mists slowly gathered round the great Minster towers, they acquired the vastness, sublimity, pathos, and majesty of some high solitary mountain.

After the unpleasant election surprise at Newcastle, in the fulness of time I fared on to Dalmeny, where Mr. Gladstone was then awaiting a hardly less unpleasant surprise in his return by a terribly reduced majority for the Midlothian holy land.

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Like men of sense and courage the Dalmeny company all made the best of things, and did not let an unpromising political future spread clouds over a well-meaning present. The only thing clear in my path was to do all that in me lay, little or much as it might be, that the great light might go out if not in splendour at least in honour; and to earn the friendly words that I came happily upon in one of Mr. Gladstone's small diaries half a dozen critical years later: "J. M. is on the whole about the best stay I have." Such service of itself is enough to sustain, fortify, elevate, amidst all that is negligible, trivial, nugatory in everyday politics.

Rosebery and I saw the loyal Armitstead and his company off from the Dalmeny platform. Then we two drove back home together. It was a lovely evening, the waters of the Forth lay glassy smooth in the sunlight. The stupendous structure of the Bridge, though only iron and mechanical, rose into the sky with a touch of the sublime. We dined alone, and had good political talk. I told him of the shock with which I had heard Mr. G.'s new language about the Irish and their distracted case, as I understood its drift. I think what I said impressed him a good deal, and I should have expected that it had given him some confidence in my insight into Irish affairs, but for a later part of the conversation. He was urgent in his view that Spencer should accompany me into Irish government: I should be unpatriotic if I did not fall in with that plan: it was my duty. Then he let fall the slightly awkward sentence—that I was indispensable to give confidence to the Irish, while Spencer at the head of administration on the spot would give confidence to England. As if Spencer's magnanimous conversion in 1886 had not cost him the confidence of England as an Irish ruler; and as if, moreover, in the peculiar situation of nationalist parties a dual or divided authority at Dublin Castle were not an

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impossibility. I did not explode or rail, but went cheerfully to my bed, while he sallied forth to Barnbougle.

Next morning we had delightful chat. He read me a paragraph from a newspaper to the effect that I was intriguing against him for the F.O. "Let's bring my intrigue to an end," cried I, producing a coin, "by tossing up for it. And if you lose the F.O., you shall be Chief Secretary for Ireland as a *solatium victo*."

After luncheon I departed carrying with me a mixed association about Dalmeny. I'm divided as to its master, between hearty kindness and attachment for him and admiration for his many gifts alike of charm and of clear head, and perplexity at his other self—as I once, in a platform gibe, described him—the dark horse in a loose-box. The dark horse was meant to convey nothing worse than Bacon intended when he talks of a statesman's discernment and penetration of judgment as to what things are to be laid open, and what to be showed at half-lights, and to whom, and when. He took with him to his roosting-place at Barnbougle all the elements of the widest popularity, and men were well justified in looking to him as leader in a popular party. His performance at the head of the first London County Council had shown the public what had been well known to his private friends before, his industry and competence in handling laborious public business and his knowledge of the ways of diverse social strata. His known fondness for books and proficiency in book-knowledge, as well as the grace and finish of form alike in writing and speaking, had captivated lively interest in the reading clans. His diction was at once pure and full, periods were spaciously rounded, and fine imaginary flights did not impair the steadiness of the plain sense which is the essence of sound politics. The puritans who had idolised Mr. Gladstone in spite of his imputed

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Anglo-Catholicism, proved to bear no grudge against Lord Rosebery for winning the Derby horse race in two successive years. Keeping himself particularly well informed as to all the world's affairs, and to those who had a voice in them, he was the best and most brilliant of conversers, unless he chose to be silent. None of us could be sure, as I have just said, of the right English for *esprit*. Everybody felt that Rosebery had more of that enchanting gift than any Englishman of his day. Wit, humour, good humour, are rare and useful aids to public business, and in his case they deserve Clarendon's words of Charles II., "that his was a pleasant, affable, recommending sort of wit." He knew how to manage with easy and unaffected melody the rich voice that nature had given him, and his gesture and accent have always been equally attractive to audiences of every type. Let me add that the glories of the famous Midlothian campaign, in which he had so active a share, now shone upon him with a reflected glow that naturally lighted up new hopes for his party. He was at the stage that comes in an important career, when influence on public opinion finds itself transformed and is fixed into responsible power. The boldest may well be the most intent on survey and re-survey of the ground.

III

From this long but not irrelevant parenthesis, let me pass on to acts and the day. I made my way to the sweet hills and lakes where I had so often in my life found so much refreshment. Practically I don't suppose we can count on a majority much over 30, including the Irish. What is the good of that for a tremendous stretch like H. R.? Spence Watson discovered me, and we were speedily astride in one of our splendid political gallops. He is horrified at the bare notion of trifling with H. R.,

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or postponing it; such a thing would not only be most dishonouring to Mr. G., but would disgust some of our best friends: what future could a party have which so played fast and loose, etc.? He was his old self, and it purged my political sight. Anybody knows that as duty becomes clearer, it naturally becomes easier. Even the delicious scenery which had for years been my earthly paradise, was lost upon me amid this throng of duties. And in the evening by the old Wishing Gate, I thought of the Sage whom Wordsworth plants there who might thirst

> for insight to allay
> Misgiving, while the crimson day
> In quietness withdraws.

But 'tis all of no avail until the crisis be overpast. With no immediate connection I recalled the beautiful lines in the sixth book of the *Excursion* about the little worth of posthumous repute in its vulgar sense:

> These Dalesmen trust
> The lingering gleam of their departed lives
> To oral record, and the silent heart;
> Depositories faithful and more kind
> Than fondest epitaph; for, if those fail,
> What boots the sculptured tomb?

When one is in a position that exacts instant *decision*, musing is no sedative.

I fear the construction of a Cabinet hardly shows the finer qualities of even able and virtuous men at their very best. Dignity, modesty, patience, self-sacrifice, considerateness, often have unusually heavy demands made upon them. Henry Sidgwick one of these days coming out of one house in Carlton Gardens met me coming out from the other, where Mr. Gladstone was then installed making his Government. Sidgwick told me that he was busy on experimental psychology. "Then pray come back with me," said I, "and I will show you some most

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curious phenomena." Remorseless importunity, mistaken over-estimates of claim and talent, hopes of being a secretary of state ending in an office in the household—those who foolishly seek from human nature better bread than can be made of wheat, and have a turn for the Pharisee breed, may, if they like, scent moral squalor. Yet it is in fact an animating and an exalted situation. To seek good workmen for national tasks that must be important and may be momentous; to make sure of selecting people with the sovereign quality of throwing their minds into joint stock in the hour of deliberation; not to lose sight of the feelings about this and that individual entertained by the composite army of voters who have placed the trust of power in your hands;—all this must at bottom exalt the mind of a man born to be first Minister in a great State, with a rare and exhilarating sense of responsibility like that of a commander in the field, or the chief judge in a supreme tribunal. Emerson, it is true, took this case to illustrate his famous doctrine of Compensation as the law of the moral universe. "The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House. It has commonly cost him all his peace, and the best of his manly attributes." With all reverence for our oracle, this may be counted rather high. Mr. Gladstone was fond of saying that the politician is the most incomprehensible of all human beings, to which some added the wicked tag that he was himself the most incomprehensible of politicians. The politician is certainly apt to be the most unreasonable, and to have the shortest memory. There was more than one acute and trying surprise in the construction of his last Cabinet, but his firm patience wore difficulties down. He observed ruefully to himself that six of the Ministers had never sat in Cabinet before. The temperature of feeling for the Irish task was not by any means uniform or equable.

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Some took that task prosaically as coming in the day's work, and they contributed with sober loyalty to the common cause. Others proved disappointing to themselves and colleagues alike. One, who had in his day been the successful advocate of sound reforms, showed that, though excellent in speech, thoroughly liberal in mind, and a man of many accomplishments, he was of comparatively secondary use in council. Another was far better equipped than any of us in wider fields of historic knowledge, and in constitutions and their juristic frame. Well might one envy his knowledge, and even more the happiness he must have had in aequiring it. He had in him, as much as any, the root of the Home Rule matter. He was in form a good speaker; his sentences stood well and easy on their four feet; his arguments were marshalled in good order; his temper was amiable and persuasive. It was a puzzle that somehow the persuasion did not always stamp lasting impressions. A third was attentive and acute, but apt to abound in the smaller points, to take minute objections, and then to press them as if they were the deepest fundamentals. A fourth was one of the best debaters in the House, and was justly acceptable on both sides. He had strong general capacities for business, and intense and almost undivided interest in it; a kind friend, nobody was more ready to help a colleague in a scrape; his judgment was good for all the occasions where prudence is safe, but less good for the occasions where true prudence happens to demand a dose of bold initiative. By temper, training, and principles he was Right Centre, and this was a qualification by no means without a value of its own in a Cabinet leaning on the Left.

Since 1886 had sprung up, among a younger generation of Liberals, a small new group that was destined as time went on to exert much influence for good or evil on the fortunes of their country.

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They were a working alliance, not a school; they had idealisms, but were no Utopians. Haldane, Asquith, Grey, Acland, had the temper of men of the world and the temper of business. They had conscience, character, and took their politics to heart. One who was destined to rise to the greatest heights of these, wrote in August 1891 to call my attention to an article in a leading Liberal organ, assuming that there was a parental relation in the spirit of adoption between himself and others of the group and me. He would fain have me know that their "hearts vibrated to the echoes" of some Bank Holiday eloquence of mine, and then promised to inform me later with filial duty what they thought was the serious policy that I should recommend. Our festive reunions—I ought to add to those I have just named, Birrell, Buxton, and Tom Ellis—had a fertility, stimulation, and life in them that was refreshing, after remainder biscuit on the one hand, and quackeries on the other, and it was of better omen. To Acland belongs special credit for keeping in touch with the labour people and their mind. Important new elements were contributed to the Cabinet by Asquith and Acland, then for the first time admitted to public office. Both wrote to thank me for my supposed share in their elevation. Asquith said:

August 16, 1892.

I must send you a line to say how deeply I feel the obligation which Acland and I, and those whom we in a sense represent, are under to you for your loyal and strenuous efforts on our behalf. Personally I owe you a special debt, of which I shall not be unmindful.

Nor has he been. One day later Greenwood said to a common friend that I had brought Asquith forward into the Cabinet, but was too trustful, and that I should now see him playing for his own hand. With a laugh I reminded them of a pleasant letter

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written by Cromwell to his good friend General Monck: "There be that tell me there is a certain cunning fellow in Scotland called George Monk, who is said to lie in wait there to introduce Charles Stuart; I pray use your diligence to apprehend him and send him up to me." So I said, "A. and I trust one another, respect, understand, and like each other. Neither of us wants anything that does not by spontaneous fitness fall to him."

Herschell on the Woolsack held his own with the lawyers, and in Cabinet was straight, ready to help, wonderfully handy, and with his full share of wisdom, divided by Aristotle into *φρόνησις* and *σοφία*. Rosebery was attractive in the eye and mind of the country, and especially he commanded the confidence of an important school of foreign policy. Spencer, though less conspicuous and indispensable than he was in 1886, held the great office from which a hundred years before his ancestor had sent Nelson to win the battle of the Nile. Charles Russell, afterwards Chief Justice, had been the most indefatigable, and by his gifts of speech, his legal repute, and his sincere conviction, one of the most effective exponents of the case of his country to audiences all over England.

Though not included in the Cabinet, a new Minister of special importance to me was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Houghton, now so well known and generally valued as Lord Crewe, began what was to be an important political career in what was then the most thankless office that any human being in any imaginable community could undertake. No appointment could have been better justified, nor was any Chief Secretary more fortunate in a colleague. He speedily divined the spirit and difficulties of Irish administration; from first to last he showed himself assiduous, acute, uncommonly clear-headed, invariably cool, considerate, loyal. Nor was there any harm in the union of

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an accomplished man of the world with marked interest and gifts in literature: these had come to him by inheritance from a father who was a man of singular literary and social mark, and as it happened had been to me one of the kindest and pleasantest of friends in early days.

IV

The General Election had inflicted a mortifying repulse at Newcastle. The Tory was at the head of the poll, my Liberal colleague was at the bottom, and I held my seat only with 10,905 votes against my Tory conqueror's 18,828. The seat was vacated by my acceptance of the Irish Office, and everybody took for granted, after the vote seven weeks before, that my doom was sealed. Be wise and cheerful, says the poet, and when all was over I told the story to a political friend.

I reached the scene of action in the afternoon (Aug. 20), and began operations in an interview with a Socialist deputation. Would I vote for the Eight Hours Bill? I was patient and good-humoured, as any sensible man is wont to be when his mind is made up. "I am heartily sorry to differ from you, my good friends," I said, "but I cannot promise to vote for Eight Hours." "Then," said they, "we cannot vote for you." And so with entire affability on both sides we parted. I walked away with my trusty agent: pale and almost tearful, he murmured that all was now over. His dismay wrung my heart, but nothing was to be done. After a modest meal, to the Town Hall. The gathering was splendid in numbers, feel, and temper. The heat furious, but I held my own with growing success for an hour and a quarter, and then to overflow for a few sentences. Felt not exactly defiant, but pleasantly intrepid. My clothes were drenched through and through. I went to my room, stripped, put on fresh apparel, and felt comfortable as possible in mind and body. My speech must have rung true. It was *me*, and 'tis the *me* that makes the fleeting fortune of a speech. Guy and I left Newcastle about 11.30; I turned into my berth at

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once and slept the sleep of the just. No wonder, after such a day.

Next night from London to Ireland to be installed at Dublin Castle; after the day's admixture of ceremonial and work, dined at Kingstown; then the boat, Neptune remembering that he carried Caesar; after a night's rest at Chester, back at Newcastle in the afternoon. Pleasant greeting from Committee, and encouraging accounts of canvass. Now a day of hard electioneering, many open-air speeches, endless committee rooms, and all the doings of a first-class contest in a great constituency with full steam up. On the following day, in glorious weather, the popular feeling strong on our side and nobly demonstrative; scarcely any Red to be seen, all Blue. At dinner in the evening news came that five-and-twenty thousand votes had been cast. Shrewd computers gave us of these fourteen thousand. The morrow would show. Breakfast over next morning I stayed behind to write letters. After a steady hour of this, I began to feel a tingling in my nerves. So about 10.30 found myself in the Hall where I had undergone so evil an hour in July. The Tory agent admitted it would be a tight fit. For an hour we all thought it looked disagreeably like it. I felt a horrid constriction of the diaphragm. At last it was clear we had won, the only question by how much. The Tories grew paler, their faces longer. A bright look came into good men's eyes. It was over five hundred; then over a thousand; at last brave Scott, my agent, came to Watson and me, and said in a low voice, 1789 ! !

What a scene when I filed out next to the Sheriff on to the square packed with thousands in every direction as far as the eye could see. Then to the Liberal Club with difficulty protected from the press by mounted police. Made a little speech from the balcony; shook a thousand hands; telegrams showered in by the hundred; I sat down and wrote my address of thanks. Then to hotel to break the bread of Jack Horner with Watson, Scott, Craig, etc. At 5 I departed. Scene in the station indescribable. Singing our election song, shouting, cheering, crying, porters leaving work and clustering in the carriage —a joyful delirium.

Surprise gave the thing a fine turn of the dramatic, both refreshing and useful in parliamentary politics. It went far beyond a mere personal win.

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Impaired though it was by the capricious rapidity of the conversion in our favour since July, still in the aspect of ministerial policy there was no mistake about it. In my Election Address I had appealed for confidence solely on the ground of applying to the case of Ireland the principles of self-government that are the secret of the strength and greatness of the Empire. Well might I speak of "an arduous task." The Irish Nationalists were divided into two bitterly antagonistic camps: one intent on their national cause, the other eager to avenge the memory of Parnell on the English ministers who had, in his own phrase, thrown him to the wolves. The agrarian question, which Lord Spencer and I had in 1886 gone through fire and water with our party and its leader to associate with the political question, was still unsettled. The standing feud between landlord and tenant had broken out, not in all cases without provocation or design, in scenes of violence, hardship, and disorder, that made the administration of law and the maintenance of a decent peace excessively difficult. To resort to the cheap and easy pressure of exceptional law was for us impossible. On the other hand, the new Irish Secretary was known to enjoy the full confidence both of the Prime Minister and of the Irish majority. All this was confirmed and extended by the incident on the banks of the Tyne.

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CHAPTER II

DUBLIN CASTLE A SECOND TIME

The nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and such like circumstances [these are the moral causes]. . . . As to physical causes, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think that men owe anything of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate.—HUME.

I

AN officer of great experience and solid judgment, who had been in the thick of it, once gave me an account of the state of the country in Spencer's day. This, and not Balfour's, was the truly critical era. "In 1882," he said, "the demoralisation, the terror, the rage, the fierce hatred, had grown to such a pitch that we were in sight of general resort to knife and pistol. The moral cowardice of what ought to have been the governing class was complete. The landlords held meetings and agreed not to give more than, say, half-a-crown abatement; then they would go individually and privately, and give two half-crowns or three half-crowns. The sheriffs even would drop a hint to the debtor; if he said such and such stock were not his, but belonged to somebody else, of course they were not legally seizable. The clergy not stirring a finger nor saying a word to restrain the storm; a few of them doing what they could to raise it. That was what Spencer had to deal with: the very foundations of the social fabric rocking. Balfour's crisis was political, and it 1892.

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was superficial therefore in comparison. And his weapons, both in the shape of exceptional law, and in the public opinion at his back, were of the very first strength."

When I arrived for the second time at Dublin Castle, both agrarian and political storm had sunk. New difficulties had arisen, minor in aspect and in substance, but with lively perils of their own, both in Ireland and at Westminster. The Nationalists, from stringent union, were now bitterly divided. It was to ask too much from human nature to suppose that the Parnellites would help a Government that was the chartered ally of their local rivals, and had ostracised their dead leader. Nor could I forget the Plan of Campaign. The device was this: the tenants of a given estate agreed with one another on the abatement that in the current half-year's rent they thought just; this they proffered in a body; if the landlord refused it for payment in full, they handed the money over through a committee to somebody in whom they had confidence, to be used for the purposes of the struggle. Of course this was an unlawful conspiracy. Parnell did not approve. Mr. Gladstone could not approve: such an expedient it was impossible to reconcile with any principles of law and order in a civilised country. It had a bad effect on British opinion, and it had helped to reduce the Liberal majority. Worst of all, from the executive point, it left some thousands of evicted tenants whose misery was both a provocation to disorder, and opened an excellent chance for political mischief-makers.

It was strongly pressed upon me by the Irish leaders that in view of the inevitable temper and tactics of the opposing Nationalist faction, I should keep in close and vigilant contact with Ireland. Westminster and Whitehall could well be trusted to look after themselves. There was no prospect of a widespread land agitation, but much loose powder

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lay about, and stray eviction scenes might easily be turned into a defiance of law that would embarrass government, and at the same time strengthen the case of the faction that was at open war with the Government's Irish friends. All this was comparatively subterranean and only half organised, but that only made it more, not less dangerous. Our law advisers were as loyal as men could be, but the old traditions of the law-room in face of new political circumstances made them nervous.

Then there was the random expectation of a million untold blessings from a new Minister who was known to nurse an earnest care for the welfare of Ireland. In early days the head of the department concerned brought me the story that all over the west they were sending up clamorous resolutions about distress, and urging the instant necessity for relief works. I asked what the county inspectors said. He read me out their letters, all telling a completely different tale. "So long as you tell me," I said, "that there is no general and real distress, we'll do without relief works." "Ah," said my adviser in extenuating tones, "I didn't know whether you might not think it politic." "You mean they will contrast my callous stinginess with the noble generosity of my predecessors. Well, we must bear the contrast as well as we can, that's all." A Chief Secretary need not be a wizard to see the moral mischief that has been wrought by the timorous almsgiving of British governors.

I sent for a county inspector from the west—a fine-looking fellow with a clear, straight eye. I told him I thought his reports a trifle harsh. "That you are conscientious is certain, but may not your mind be unconsciously rather coloured?" "No," he replied firmly, "I have no bias, but I hate lying, and these tales about landlord and tenant are full of lying." He went on to talk with evident sincerity about the people of the west. "I like them," he

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said, "but they simply don't know what truth means. They know no difference between the truth and a lie. Whichever comes uppermost at the moment does well enough." He said something about their laziness, and how much more they would get out of their land if they knew they would be left to their own resources. As it is, they are demoralised by habits of long reliance on aid. He was one of the ablest supervisors of government relief works, and knows well what he talks about.

If there had been time for history, I should have liked to read to him the passage where Arthur Young describes the Ireland of only a hundred years before, which I will now make time to transcribe: "The landlord of an Irish estate inhabited by Roman Catholics is a sort of despot who yields obedience in whatever concerns the poor to no law but his own will. Speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of written liberty. A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer, or cotter dares to refuse to execute. Disrespect or anything tending to haughtiness he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip with the most perfect security. Knocking down is spoken of in a manner that makes an Englishman stare. Landlords of consequence have assured me that many of their cotters would think themselves honoured by having their wives or daughters sent for to the bed of their masters, a mark of slavery that proves the oppression under which such people must live." That is what honest Arthur Young said. As if any social system on earth, or in the darker realms under the earth, could have been better devised for breeding men indifferent to questions between truth and lies. Men talk of the necessity of history and the fatality of race; but let us be quite sure in Ireland not to

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set down to the second what is easily explained by the first.

Another official from the south-west—a strapping fellow with a good brow and open eye—had served for several years in Clare, and liked the people very much, though he admits—too willingly, one hopes—that you can get a man to take your enemy's life for a couple of sovereigns. Plenty of arms, though probably old and bad; the revolver coming into fashion, and displacing the musket. The Clare men are big fellows, and the county is not poor. Fenian organisation very good there—a completed system, only the cadres not filled up. A very interesting and graphic account of a rehearsal of the mobilisation of Fenian forces one night in the neighbourhood of Ennis. The Head Man came from Cork, others from Dublin, and so on, by way of testing discipline. Good informers very difficult to get; for the bad work is allotted to some small group of five or six, and in so small a band, if any discovery is made by the police, suspicion has a good chance of lighting on the traitor. He regarded the whole of Clare as disaffected, and when I asked what sort of strength the Fenians could muster, he gave a figure which was demonstrably absurd.

II

GWEEDORE.—One sanguinary incident stood out in the disorders of that time. In the far north-west of Donegal is Gweedore, a district of seventy or eighty square miles in extent; and at the remote edge of Gweedore is Derrybeg, on the shore of the Atlantic Ocean. Gweedore has between nine hundred and a thousand Catholic families, and about a score of Protestants. They speak little or no English; live on potatoes and meal, with now and then an egg; pay an average rent of five-and-twenty shillings an acre, out of all decent proportion

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for land for which every atom of value over threepence or sixpence the acre is due to the labour of the occupier and his forebears. Derrybeg, the uttermost edge of human desolation—with its rude cabins, rough patches, stretches of savage obdurate stone, and a ceaseless moan rising up from the great floor of waters, mournful, wild, and careless of poor man, the phantom of a day.

The ruling personage in Gweedore was one whom some regarded as the worst and loudest of firebrand priests, the busy inspirer of disorder and violence; others, as the indomitable champion of his flock against the oppressor, and their helper against harsh, grudging nature. He had built schools, got roads made, and when they were famine-stricken had appealed for them to the charity of the world. In either case, whether it were due to gratitude or to superstitious fear, he was followed by the ardent devotion of his flock. He had undergone three months' imprisonment in Derry Gaol for a speech where he had exhorted them to combine in resisting the exaction of rents, which in fact they could only provide out of eleemosynary contributions from abroad. A fresh warrant was now (February 1889) out against him for renewed incitements, but he did his best to evade it. The authorities calculated on catching him at the hour of his sacred ministrations —surely no happy calculation at the best. He had been three or four days in his house, the police had talked to him over the wall, and could have arrested him whenever they liked. They chose to try to seize the outlaw on the Sunday morning. The church, newly built in a low sheltering ravine, was crowded with some twelve hundred persons. The officer stationed most of his force at a little distance, and then with strange indiscretion went to the church with only six or seven men to await the end of the service. When the vested priest appeared, after some discussion on the warrant, the officer laid

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rough hands upon him under the eyes of his flock, and drew his sword. A cry went up from the enraged throng, "*Bual shé an sogarth lesh an glaiv*," that he was killing the priest with his sword. The six or seven police were swept down, and in a few moments the unfortunate officer was furiously battered to death with stones and sticks at the door of the priest's house.

Twenty-three men were returned for trial—ten for murder, thirteen for conspiracy. The prisoners were transferred under the Crimes Act from Donegal to Queen's County. The story of the jury deserves attention. It lights up many things in Irish national life. The population of Queen's County was 65,000, of whom 57,000 were Catholics. The parliamentary voters stood at 13,000. The panel of special jurors only included 217 names, or about 1 in 60 of the persons presumed to be capable citizens; but of the 217, only 66 were Catholics. When 117 names had been called and had answered, the judge suggested that they had enough to form a jury from. Of this number, the Crown challenged 42, the prisoner being limited to 20. The jury was exclusively Protestant, in a county where Catholics were to Protestants as 57 to 8, or about 7 to 1. Not one of the jurors knew Irish, and not many of the prisoners knew English. An application was made to have a view jury, for the reason that the peculiar formation of the ground made it impossible for the constables to see all the incidents to which they testified. The Crown resisted, and the application was refused. The judge, who conducted his share of the trial with unimpeached integrity, commented severely on the original error of the Government in not sending an officer of proved discretion and with an overwhelming force. He expressed his view that there had been no antecedent combination, or, in other words, that the killing of the officer was the result of impulse and sudden provocation. One

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man was found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. Conviction affirmed by decision of a higher court on a point of law.

When a second prisoner was put on his trial, the jury, this time comprising one Catholic, disagreed. Then came a compromise among the counsel. Four of those indicted for murder were discharged, and the remaining five were sentenced to terms of penal servitude. Of the thirteen misdemeanants, some were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, and the rest were discharged. The priest, who had been returned for trial for murder, and had passed many weeks in prison, pleaded guilty to some minor count, and was discharged. When I arrived in Dublin four of the prisoners were still undergoing unexpired terms. I determined that the clemency of the Crown might well go further, and that the men should be discharged freely, not on licence. The release must be kept secret, or we should have had an exultant crowd, bonfires, fireworks, and other embarrassing pleasantries at the prison gates. An English Member of Parliament arranged with me that a priest would be ready to meet the men at the train and carry them home. I told him they must be out that night; warders in plain clothes would take them to the railway for the 7.30 train, and as the night was furiously cold, the men must have coats. Abundant difficulties were naturally made at the Castle: it was too late; warders had no right to go with prisoners; it was wrong for warders to go in plain clothes; the prison had no greatcoats. *Nabochlish!* My dinner at the Lodge was scarcely over when my friend arrived with the good news that he had seen all safely accomplished. The railway platform was nearly empty. A couple of warders in plain clothes marched in, the four with them; the friendly priest shook hands with them on meeting, and the warders on parting. The

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priest and they got into a compartment where the rugs already lay on the seat. Three or four other people stepped in; nobody noticed them; the engine whistled, and off they went. The thing is just, righteous, honourable and politic, whatever they may say in Parliament.

The next day was Christmas, and brought painful interruption of the mood of the season. A dynamite explosion had come off at eleven the night before, close under the wall of the Castle. A constable was blown to pieces. There was an ugly *strages*, and large patches of black-red gore upon the ground—a hateful vision. The head officials gathered in my room: everybody quite cool. Some thought one thing, some another, as usual when nobody knows what to think. At the first moment of such things, people do best to hold their tongues, and I held mine—though I felt the affair would be twisted somehow, as indeed it was, into connection with the Gweedore release. An obvious answer to that was that a precisely similar attempt took place a year ago. I telegraphed to the Queen's Secretary and wrote a letter to H.M., for which I shall presently have a return in the shape of a sharp remonstrance about law and order and the peril of letting desperadoes out of prison.

III

Administration of the law is a great deal more important for the contentment and well-being of a community than most purely political questions. Our six years of vigilant attention while in Opposition to this side of Irish affairs had shown the paradox of a magistracy mainly Protestant in a country predominantly Catholic. We were bound to attempt redress of the balance. That was not so easy as it might seem. I scorned delights and lived laborious days in going with the Lord

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Chancellor through lists of magistrates proposed to him. They contained a certain food for sardonic amusement, to anybody capable of admitting that peculiar Swiftian tincture into public business. Among worthies early mentioned to us for the county bench were: a pawnbroker, with too great a kindness for stolen goods; a man commended by the bishops with remarkable unction, but just before his commission was signed news came that he had that day been sentenced to one month's imprisonment by a "packed Unionist bench"; a man who had been twice tried for firing out of his shop at a Protestant procession; a man described as "blunt, but inclined to be honest," not much education, what he has he picked up in gaol, where he passed some portion of his youth; a considerable number of men who farm small holdings, and drink freely at fairs and markets; a nominee who had the misfortune to get himself indicted for rape, but not to be outwitted by the law he married the lady.

The Chancellor, one of the best-natured men and most helpful colleagues that ever lived, ploughed steadily through the lists, with the aid of information from the local constabulary officers, and in the end we made a panel of new men, not much behind the old in real respectability, and not at all behind them in true judicial quality of mind. No scandal in the new was comparable with the scandal of the old, and no ill came of it. We appointed 637 county justices over the heads of the lieutenants of counties: 554 of them Catholics, 83 Protestants. But consider the state of things after our felonious operation was over. We reduced the old Protestant ascendancy from between 3 and 4 to 1, to a proportion of rather more than 2 to 1. Add that the majority of 2 to 1 on the bench represents a minority of 1 to 3 in population. For this we were severely criticised as introducing the

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poison germ of the spoils system into the virgin purity of Irish public life.

Of course disappointment was inevitable. The Chancellor told me, in passing, that at a recent full-dress meeting of our Nationalist friends, somebody proposed a resolution of violent censure on him and me for our shortcomings. The cleverest of them spoke in a lively vein of aggression and invective against both me and things in general. It looked as if the motion would pass, until somebody remarked that if this should happen, I should very likely throw the whole up, "and where would you be then?" This was sobering, and the censure was cut down to the Lord Chancellor. "I defy a single gentleman in the room," cried the caustic voice, "to threaten us with a Lord Chancellor's resignation."

The spectre of religious differences haunted other fields as unabashed as spectres have a right to be. When Cardwell was Chief Secretary, he was urged to appoint a certain man to be a professor—"Though not perhaps the very best man in the field, yet he is perfectly competent." "Oh yes," said Cardwell; "whenever I hear it said that a candidate is competent, I scent a job." I was pressed on the appointment of a professor of mathematics. It lay between a first-rate Cambridge man, a Senior Wrangler; a second-rate Dublin man, and a third-rate ditto. But then the third-rate happens to be a Catholic. Out of fifteen chairs at this Queen's College in the most Catholic part of Ireland, only three held by Catholics. What was one to do? I forget what we did. Again, an important politician insisted that we should not appoint a certain doctor to a chair of midwifery, for he was a Unionist and a Presbyterian, and his nomination would give enormous offence. I replied that if it had only been metaphysics, or even the much more important

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subject of *belles lettres*, I should be quite indifferent. But the two dark blots on the candidate's soul political and ecclesiastic that he was a Presbyterian Unionist, were not to count against his well-known skill in gynaecology, and it would have been a cruel scandal to appoint anybody else. For a chair of anatomy, one candidate had contributed good papers to the proper journals on the arthrology of the haddock and other matters. It was pressed upon me that the question was not at all whether a man had the latest views of the jointing of the haddock, but whether he was a Catholic or a Unitarian. I daresay this may have been a perfectly reasonable way of putting things, and I hope we decided accordingly.

It was not to be supposed that this deep feud between religious communions would leave us free of apprehension in the northern field where the fire of theologic faction burns hottest. In 1886, as I have already noted, the flames broke out oddly enough on the day after the hated Bill had been rejected in the House of Commons, and a sanguinary conflict lasted for several weeks. This time that brilliant soldier and most attractive of men, Lord Wolseley, was in command of the forces, and of course fell in with our well-considered plans if need should arise, though he had been said to have used some awkward language about breaking his sword rather than draw it on Ulster. While the Bill was running its course, there were signs of the old disquiet of six years before in Belfast. The Castle thought I should be on the ground to decide in case of untoward incidents.

Diary. *April* 22, 1893.—On my way thither went in the trial trip of the *Campania* as far as Queenstown. Lord Inverclyde, our host, full of life, energy, vivacity—the very type of the sane and strenuous man of action. The grinding and droning that had filled my ears for the past weeks in the House

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of Commons suddenly sank into a far-off nightmare. Some talk with the doctor, a fine-looking fellow, a Parnellite. For pure maddening wrong-headedness give me an Irishman of this type. Somebody once called political Ireland the home of the blockhead nation of Europe. Blockheads unhappily survive in all nations, and for that matter in their government of Ireland the blockhead's cap is no bad fit for her British rulers.

Sunday, April 23.—Rose at 4 and went on deck, hoping to find a glorious dawn. Alas, the sky was grey and the land lay dim on the horizon. The sea-lights twinkled and revolved in pale distance. We ploughed slowly ahead through the smooth waters, leaden in the breaking day. A white broken line showed sea meeting the foot of deep green slopes—such meeting always the surest secret of marine beauty. The stillness hardly broken by the creak of the anchor chain. These pensive scenes are a true background of life and thought, the eternal setting of our human things. The burning of a coloured light over the ship's side summoned the pilot, and we soon saw his boat pulling over the waters, and the pilot nimbly mounting on to the deck, the ship's company wrapped in sleep.

April 24.—At the Castle. Telegrams all day from Belfast; things looking pretty well. Next day, some baton-charging. I meant to cross home that night, and had telegram from London pressing me to come next day. H. was strong that I should stay in Dublin: "If to-night gets well over, we shall be out of the wood." The reports continued good. Lurgan would have been troublesome, but for the wisdom of a priest who took the precaution of removing the clapper from the bell of his church; it was to have been the tocsin. If only the church militant were rather more often in this active way the church pacificant! In Belfast itself important

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employers were energetic for peace, and there was no revival of the sanguinary feuds and terrors of 1886.

I was warned to prepare for a fusillade in the House of Commons. Sexton, the brilliant member for Belfast, came to my room, to protest in the name of his Nationalist constituents against the action of magistrates and police. I showed him my full telegrams, explained how matters really stood, and bade him ask as many questions as ever he might think fit. When the time came he pressed me pretty hard and long in the House; but the harder he pressed, the further he drove me to go in defence. There was violence and intolerance no doubt, but all would have been aggravated by anything that the Orangemen could have represented as excess of force. A furious collision between political Orangemen would have put the Protestants in the wrong with English public opinion, and in any case would have been to the disadvantage of Orangemen and police alike, while the Nationalists would have figured as amiable and innocent onlookers. Tactics of this kind perhaps lurked behind the shower of Sexton's questions, but it was pure unreason to quarrel with us for not breaking more Orange crowns. For once common sense in Belfast was recognised in private on both sides. H., who had been to Belfast some time later, asked the local Commissioner whether the Chief Secretary could safely go there now. "The only danger is," replied the Commissioner in half-sportive paradox, "lest he should be captured by the Protestant Unionists. They approve of him since his impartial answers about the Shankhill Road, and they might take him up with enthusiasm, in order to spite his Nationalist friends."

Both north and south you must look for the incalculable. One day there happened to be a considerable faction-fight in Cork. I asked at the

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Castle what it was about. "Oh, it was the old quarrel between the two Earls in the time of Queen Elizabeth." Here was the fatality of history indeed. What was the special quarrel, I had not time to identify then or since.

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CHAPTER III

EMBERS OF AGRARIAN FLAME

We find the first fundamental maxim of jurisprudence to be that no one should be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of his natural judge.—TREITSCHKE.

I

I HAVE spoken of the nervousness of the law-room in face of prevailing political peculiarities. Here is an illustration :

Diary. *October* 31, 1893.—Cleared up papers and boxes at the Lodge and walked away from that elysian abode. The lawns were white with sparkling hoar-frost, the sunlight warmed the great beech trunks, the lines of the mountains stood out dark and firm against the clear sky, like the hills near Lucca. A glorious scene — only, like all the beauty of Ireland, without the associations of composure and peace. I have often tried to explain and analyse this feel in Irish landscape. There is none in it of that spirit of happiness that makes the English lakes divine.

I had not much composure or peace to-day. The Parnellites have made their first move in the way of active defiance of the law. They insisted on holding a meeting to the tune of a couple of thousand people, on an evicted farm ; they made violent speeches ; next day they proceeded to the lands again, and set to work to rebuild the evicted tenant's house. So we had a council of war. I had the utmost difficulty in securing definite or

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coherent deliverance from the lawyers. It is clear that the law has been freely, abundantly, and defiantly set at naught. Had we any excuse for shutting our eyes? None. Should we send down an order at once to disperse the builders and arrest those who resisted? Or should we treat the building as merely a part of the transactions initiated on Sunday, and summon the ringleaders, including a couple of Parnellite Members of Parliament? ——, whom I usually regard as one of the best heads in the Castle, to my surprise was in favour of arresting the evicted tenant himself at the moment of his restoration to his home. The final voice was for dispersion and arrest, *plus* summons. X. drew up the order. All agreed. I interposed half an hour's delay. At the end of it Y. and I agreed not to send the order, but to take proceedings against the ringleaders. Easy in comparison was Balfour's position. He had only to think of enforcement of the law. I have to think how, while enforcing the law, I shall not leave my Nationalist allies planted in a position which they cannot defend on Irish platforms, and which will hand them over to their Parnellite foes. The Chancellor came back to express a hope that I had not understood him to be for violent counsels.

Long close talk with the Attorney. The disturbers are going on with their building. So we despatched an order to break up the disturbers and arrest in case of persistence. Heard by wire that the summonses had been issued at Castlerea. So we are now in full war with the Parnellites! The only wonder is that the crisis did not occur last year.

November 14, 1893. *Castle*, 10.30.—Found a movement afoot in the law-room for not going on with the second set of summonses! As these introduce the real grievance of the business, namely violent and forcible entry, whereas the former set

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only charged unlawful assembly, we should leave ourselves in the very weakest position conceivable. In my room I told the lawyers I never heard so absurd a proposal, and directed a telegram to be sent off at once, that the prosecuting counsel was to go ahead. At night I had a wire that all had gone well, and the case, which I rather feared might drag on for some days, was settled by evening.

Both on the merits and in view of party manœuvres, the agrarian confusion of the evicted tenants was perhaps the roughest bit of the road. We set up a Commission to survey the ground, with an English judge of high character and much experience at its head. They reported, and on their reports we framed a Bill. Its principles could only be justified by the revolutionary plea of public safety, but it was in truth only a very slight extension of a process that had been over and over again applied to land in Ireland. The crucial point was whether the restoration of these unfortunate tenants by their landlords should be voluntary or compulsory. The Irishmen insisted that if the process were not compulsory, it would be idle, and vowed that they would rather go back to Ireland with no Bill at all in their hands than a voluntary Bill. I told them that in my view it was pure folly not to desire to go back to Ireland with a Conciliation Bill that gave them a large sum of money in the first place; good machinery for arbitration in the second; and, if they were so minded, a first-class grievance in the third. Irish leaders came to my room in the House of Commons, and admitted what was to be said for conciliation. The Tory and the Liberal Unionist leaders, Balfour and Chamberlain, came, and showed reasonable desire to get the question out of the way. Its postponement would only throw difficulties on to their own hands when in the fulness of time they

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should come in. We parted, each to feel the ground, they with the extreme Irish Right, I with the extreme Irish Left. Time was an embarrassment, for we were near the end of July, and resort to guillotine closure would produce an irritation that might easily be fatal to the chances of bringing the Bill out of the quicksands.

A letter of mine to Chamberlain states the case, if anybody cares to disinter a mummy :

J. M. to J. C.

July 29, 1893.

Many thanks for your note.

The plain truth is that the risk of miscarriage of a settlement comes as much from your extreme Irish Right as from my extreme Irish Left. An almost insuperable difficulty has been created (1) by the resolutions passed the other day by the Landlords' Convention ; (2) by the line taken by the landlords in the debate.

You know how suspicious my Irish friends are. They are more suspicious than ever by reason of all this. It has convinced them that the landlords would deliberately turn any merely voluntary bill into a dead letter, and would steadily boycott the three arbitrators from the very outset.

When I first undertook this difficult business two years ago, I said to my friends that we should do no good without a tacit understanding with the landlords. They predicted that I should never come to any understanding. But I have persisted and persevered. I have steadily done my best to cultivate relations with such of the landlord leaders as I could get at.

If Balfour and you had only stood out against the Landlord Ultras, we might have reached a settlement that would have been as great a gain to you as to us, or even greater—for it won't be very pleasant for you to have to renew Coercion the moment you cross the threshold of Dublin Castle.

You understand that I am not writing this by way of reproach—but only to show you that it will not be my own fault, as you say, if my little skiff of a bill goes to the bottom.

In this stage, I don't see, under the circumstances above described, how I can force a compromise. And if we

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guillotine, the Lords will very likely feel driven to throw out the Bill simpliciter, and then we shall have no chance even of a compromise at a later stage.

The Cabinet were perplexed, but never faltered in consideration for their Irish minister. Many were the moves and attempted deals, open and subterranean; these all breathed the spirit of conciliation, but meanwhile they plunged the divided Irishmen into a half-suppressed panic of suspicion, fear, anger. In the end, however, their leaders abandoned jealous aversion to any idea of transforming the Bill from compulsory to voluntary. We heard that Balfour was reasonable, but Hartington stiff and awkward. I went into the House looking for an interesting situation, and so it proved, but a very long way from the kind that I had expected. Brodrick moved the rejection of the Bill. What I had settled with Dillon was that they should next hold out an olive-branch. Courtney was to follow with an appeal to Balfour. Oh, for the best-laid schemes of mice and men! While Brodrick was speaking, I had a scrap from Dillon that a confederate would follow. I was content, for he had told me that the person chosen was the strongest of all of them for peace. Brodrick was not particularly violent, and used language about amnesty that gave an excellent peg on which the Nationalists might hang a pacific speech. I said several times to Harcourt, "This is excellent. Could not be better. Balfour will be in a difficulty, and we shall have a chance at any rate of saving the Bill." Up gets the conciliatory Irish coadjutor, and within five minutes we were launched upon one of his most tempestuous diatribes against landlords and all their works. This naturally provoked the ablest of the Irish Unionists, though he had been strongly for compromise and conciliation, into a bitter and rasping rebutter. The

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House had been interested and hopeful, but the flood of boiling lava instantly scorched up the tender green shoots of accommodation, and the Bill was doomed. It found its way to the Lords, where, be it always remembered, the Irish tenants had never from the beginning of time had one single direct representative and spokesman; there its shrift was short. Lord Salisbury dealt with it in a speech of much pleasantry and easy incisive irony. Our leader of the House did it rather less than justice, for he had been busy with foreign affairs all the afternoon. As if the tenant in his rags and tatters was not more important for the passing hour than all the starred and ribboned ambassadors in London!

Irish land in a more constructive shape made a refreshing meal for six-and-thirty sittings of a select committee, over which I presided. We had abundant and discriminating evidence, without many spurts or flashes of the temper which the fatal theme is apt to provoke. When the time came, however, for settling whether the draft report of the landlords or mine should be read a second time, mine was carried. Brodrick very quietly and civilly said his friends proposed to take no further part. I, also quietly and civilly, deprecated such a course. I pointed out that there was only a question of a couple of days between us; that I had stated from the first that we could not go to any extent beyond official witnesses; that we should sit for two or three years if we acted on their principles and turned ourselves into a second Bessborough or Cowper or Devon Commission. "I do not wish to say anything ill-natured," said I, "but you must expect the public to observe that you who complain of the Committee for not sitting longer, are the same gentlemen who did your best to prevent the Committee from sitting at all, and succeeded in

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preventing its appointment as long as possible." However, out they all went. As soon as they had shaken the dust off their feet, we set to work; attention was close and steadfast, the spirit of give and take admirable; temper, order, and manners truly deliberative and worthy of serious men on serious business. Of course there were undercurrents perceptible to the knowing eye. A. B. pooh-poohed paragraphs where he thought C. D. had been my inspirer, and C. D. criticised others wherever legal words betrayed A. B. If the sky now and then began to blacken, it was soon blue again. Nobody was more admirably effective than T. W. Russell, with his knowledge of the subject, his clear head, his acquaintance with the Ulster interest, and his conviction that, if the game was rightly played, that interest would force the Tory hand both in Lords and Commons. In good time the Report was published, and then my Land Bill followed—I forget what number in the endless list of such instruments—and both Report and Bill were in a few months packed safe away in the crowded, dusty, and unhonoured pigeon-holes allotted decade after decade to Irish land. So at least it seemed to my moderate expectations. Happily precedents were broken, and our proposals found themselves adopted as the most valuable clauses in my Unionist successor's Land Act of 1896.

Among other not unimportant miscellanea was the setting up of a Commission about Irish financial relations. It was not easy either in composition or order of reference. I had a discussion about it in Balfour's room with him and Goschen, the latter particularly strong in grasp and mastery. Balfour clever and subtle. Goschen professed to be much alarmed at the absence of a strong and competent Englishman from the Commission. Suggested Lansdowne. All very amicable. Goschen recommended both Balfour and me to read Mr. Glad-

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stone's speech on raising Irish spirit duties, which I much suspect neither of us ever did. Sexton in good time, by his talents, industry, and skill, proved himself master of the Commission when it got to work, but the result went down into the gulf where the great question of which it was a fundamental part lay dormant for a dozen years to come.

II

It was a good deal later than this that I had a rather memorable talk at the Irish Office with a particularly able adviser. The upshot of it may be very shortly put. "The usual signs preceding bad times are making their appearance in Ireland. There is an increase of boycotting with intimidation. This leads by invariable rule to outrage. There is more resistance to officers of the law. The outbreak in Limerick and Clare is only symptomatic; such outbreaks do not remain isolated, and do not die out. The police, though perfectly loyal and true to duty and discipline, are not in active and spontaneous sympathy with us; do not feel that I shall back them up [here they were thoroughly wrong]; cannot be expected to be on their mettle for a Government that is for disbanding them. The R.M.'s much the same: mean to do what is right in a general way, but being hostile to Government do none of the things that aid a Government, yet which a Government cannot safely ask or suggest to them. We shall immediately be having the summer Assizes: some of the judges will send for the county inspectors, and will fish from them material for charges about the state of the country. More debates in the House, more discouragement or worse in the officials, more defiance from the people. *Therefore* had I not better swallow the dose and clap on the Coercion handcuff again?"

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I replied to him that I had been ruminating over all this. I never dreamed that we could govern Ireland without a Crimes Act and at the same time without the active and energetic support of the priests and the political leaders. I dropped the first because I counted on the second. My expectation was disappointed. Neither priests nor politicians had put their shoulder to the wheel. In all this he concurred. "But do the strong thing," he said. "Go down to the House and say you are going to change venue. They will respect you. Then bring out again the strong magistrates, etc. etc."

All this was in perfect good faith. *Prima facie* it seemed good sense. But *prima facie* is not meant for serious politics. Any valiant scheme of this sort was wholly impracticable. There was no extensive disorder to warrant recourse to exceptional law. The Cabinet to a man was pledged against resort to it unless disorder could be shown to be extensive. To support anything that could be labelled Coercion would be instant ruin to the Nationalist Irishmen. Experience was against the efficacy. We had to carry on without a state of siege, and perseverance in patient counsels was more and more amply justified as the months went on. For once the Castle was in luck.

Now let us hear how things were seen from another point of view. About the same date (1893) I had one of a thousand free conversations with an Irish leader. A note of one of them may be worth reproducing, as on the whole an excellent account of the situation. He preached me a sermon on the fact of my own dangers and shortcomings. I was running some risk of losing popularity in Ireland; of losing touch with popular sentiment; of chilling the feeling for me both in the country and among the Irishmen in the House of Commons. The tone of my answers was felt to be repellent and stand-off. It was beginning to be suspected in Ireland that I

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took a hopeless view on the question of the evicted tenants. It was a mistake to say that rents were being well paid. It was a mistake to tell the House that prices were good, and to demolish the case for revising judicial rents. Why did I take the side of the Protestants in Belfast? All this was of a highly *damping* tendency, it seemed. I ought to look less to the H. of C. and more to Ireland. Ireland was the only place to which I need seriously attend; that I ought to watch with ceaseless vigilance; that is the centre of my power, and I can have no other. "You have the ugliest, dirtiest, and most dangerous post in the whole Government. Your only safety lies in your being able to point to your hold there. That is the only protection for the Government, and the only protection for your own position in English politics." In all this, which was said with perfect moderation and in a sympathetic tone, there was a vast deal of truth. I have undoubtedly fallen somewhat out of close touch with the Irishmen. My answer, meantime, was something of this kind:

1. I am conscious of my own unswerving fidelity to the national cause of Ireland, and I take for granted that you are all aware of this, and give me credit for knowing how best to carry out our firm, common ends.

2. You think me wanting because I don't beat and buffet the landlords, even when I am compelled to send police to their aid. My view is that, just because my corner is ugly and dangerous, it eases the strain to give the landlords no excuse for violent attack. I wish to show some of the resolute impartiality which we are all so fond of predicting as the certain result of H. R. when it comes.

3. It is all very well to describe moonlighters in a philosophic way, as a roving police for the protection of tenants and the prevention of grabbing; but when the roving police commit murder, a Chief

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Secretary must try to catch the roving police and to hang them.

4. Ulster two months ago was one of the most formidable rocks ahead. A single wrong word from my lips would make it furiously hostile. What you call deference is circumspection, and never in this world was circumspection more urgently needed than in dealing with this dangerous volcano.

5. I must think of popular sentiment, it is quite true. But I must think of my officers. If they are allowed to suspect that I shall palliate boycotting, blackguard speeches, or the feats of the roving police who shoot people by moonlight, they will speedily conceive a hearty contempt for me, and much indifference to their own work.

6. The elements of my very agreeable situation are quite plain: (*a*) a population just emerging from a long spell of turbulent demoralisation; (*b*) political leaders who are absorbed in their own faction feuds; (*c*) police and magistrates, very good in a mechanical way, but without zeal for a Government which is for breaking them up; (*d*) judges who make political charges to grand juries, and send every tit-bit over to the Irish lawyers in opposition; (*e*) the ceaseless vigilance and activity of the Tories and Unionists in raking all over the field for traces of disorder, and in presenting violently exaggerated cases to H. of C.; (*f*) absorbing preoccupation with the committee on the H. R. Bill; (*g*) the consciousness that my colleagues and my party look upon me, quite wrongly as it happens, as the real cause of their being plunged in this dismal bog. Am I now, I said, to add to all these the coldness or even the resentment of Ireland and the Irish party? If so, of course I should be a madman to entertain a shadow of a hope of coming safe out of the position. Success in any full sense is out of the question. Am I to give up the hope of that modest, but by no means certain

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success, which consists in escaping without absolute disgrace?

I daresay something in the same tone might be heard on the Unionist side. No Irish loyalist that I have ever heard of is willing to admit that England can do anything right. She is a special providence whose help is due in all things, and every failure is laid at her door. Everything wrong is set down by loyalists quite as heartily as by nationalists to "you English people."

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CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE IN PARLIAMENT

MEANWHILE striking events had happened. The Home Rule Bill of 1893 had passed the Commons, and been thrown out in the Lords. In the winter I had worked over the frame of a measure with three or four of the Irish leaders, including the important assistance of Blake, a prominent lawyer and politician from Canada, who had come over and held an Irish seat, as an expert in the making and working of subordinate parliamentary constitutions. These secret consultations oddly enough were carried on at the not very secret Shelburne Hotel, for, as I was told, the etiquette of the moment strictly forbade an Irish member to cross the threshold of either Castle or Lodge. These were the preliminaries of construction by the Cabinet committee. Mr. Gladstone worked the Bill in the Commons with an infinite variety and resource never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Talma, Kean, Kemble might have envied his magical transitions. I have described in full elsewhere [1] the amazing scenes where, in spite of party passion, the whole House watched him with wonder and delight as children watch a wizard. Balfour put the case against the Bill at its strongest in speech after speech, all on a high sustained level, with no flat or flaccid places, the whole line and course of his arguments unfaltering. Mr. Gladstone

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, Book X. chap. vii. sect. v.

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was the only man among us all who infused commanding moral conception into the Irish movement —the only man who united the loftiest ideals of national life and public duty with the glory of words, the moral genius of Mazzini with the political genius of Cavour, whose work was left unfinished as his was. He seemed to make Irishmen believe in themselves by the very force of his own belief in them. As I have said, I had thrashed out the scheme for the Cabinet with the Irish leaders at Dublin in the winter, "tossing thoughts more easily," in Bacon's phrase, for the counsels of friends. But tossing thoughts is not quite the same as drafting clauses, and Jenkyns, Rigby, and I grunted, sweated, and burdens bore for three or four hours every morning during the long progress of the Bill. Then we found that magic had some drawbacks. Mr. Gladstone would pick up the paper of amendments, put on his glasses, make up his mind in the twinkling of an eye, with little thought of outlying consequences from a concession here, a refusal there. "Depend upon it," Harcourt said to me, "this making of concessions is very useful to soften the temper of the House; it lessens bitterness." Yes, but at the expense of new trouble and sharp cries in a quarter where the two domestic factions of the time made Irishmen doubly sensitive. It was glorious, but full of hourly hazard. Our Irish friends daily overwhelmed me—small blame to them —with private protests at our exposure of surface to the Parnellite foe. "It must be rather heartbreaking for you," Asquith once said to me on the bench; "'tis brutal to put into words, but really, if Mr. Gladstone stood more aside, we might get on better." Though putting away this impious thought, I could not deny that a little dulness and a steady flow of straightforward mediocrity often mean a wonderful saving of parliamentary time. In our morning counsels Rigby was able, sound,

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downright, but not rapid. "Ah, I see," a legal colleague said to me, "inaccuracy is good enough for you, if it is only nimble." He sometimes reminded me of a Committee of Charitable Trusts on which Mr. Jesse Collings sat; also Davey, the subtlest of lawyers, of sure and enormous knowledge, on whose mind as on a photographic plate facts seemed always and instantly to fall in their legal aspect. When Davey found some strong occult point against our new-born Birmingham theory of charitable trusts, Collings with rough besom sent the rapier flying into space, like the honest kitchen wench in Molière's play when M. Jourdain was for teaching her how to fence.

Herschell, on the other hand, consummately skilful in command of apt legal words, ingenious turns of sentence, and all the arts for stopping one hole without opening another, was always ready to help at a pinch. Rigby said of Jessel that his rapidity of insight into a case was a miracle: the jest was that he could read both sides of a sheet of paper at once. Cairns, the one lawyer whose legal perception never erred, penetrated to the heart of a case at a single thrust, with one flash of his eye. Westbury very slap-dash, almost as often wrong as right. Rigby himself is, I suppose, much the strongest legal mind I have had to do with; yet he has two faults of which I am above all others impatient; he is deliberately slow, and violently emphatic. Balfour, I hear, declares that if Rigby and Davey made £20,000 a year at the Chancery Bar, he would back himself and me to have made £40,000 apiece. For myself, I was content with a decidedly more moderate figure.

With Jenkyns, the draftsman, I was in close contact in this and several other laborious and difficult pieces of public business for many months. It interests me to transcribe my impressions of a truly remarkable figure, as I recorded them in a

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letter to Ilbert not long after Jenkyns' too early death in 1899. Even minor personalities are sometimes as worthy of commemoration as parliamentary chiefs.

The measure for the better government of Ireland took us over the whole field. There was no single part of it, constitutional, financial, or administrative, where Jenkyns failed to show himself a consummate master of his trade. His knowledge of administrative practice was never at fault, his store of case and precedent was of the richest; in meeting the endless ἀπορίαι that rise in every large and comprehensive Bill, he abounded in skill, in ingenuity, in resource, without a trace of the over-supple or the wire-drawn. Again, while his vast experience had given him an acute insight into the points that might be raised against you in the House or elsewhere, nobody had less in common with that most tiresome variety of the human species which delights in starting difficulties and parading objections. On the contrary, he started with the assumption once for all that the thing must be done, and that it was for him to help in getting it effectually done. His thorough-going veracity and faithfulness, alike as man and workman, prevented him from ever giving lazy or compliant assents. I have seen him more than once stand against all Mr. Gladstone's driving power (which was no joke), and I have heard stories of his blunt speech in other cases. Nobody that I have ever known was more absolutely free from the faintest tinge of egotism or touchy self-consciousness. He seemed never to think of himself at all, any more than we can suppose a swift and powerful locomotive thinking of itself. To make the journey as safely as the state of the road or the bog, the Cabinet gradients, the force and direction of the parliamentary wind, would allow—this was all that concerned him. He struck me as treating praise and blame, appreciation of his work by others or disappointment at it, as really no concern of his. The work itself, knowledge extended, the business done—that was what he cared about. His power of toil was immense, his industry unflagging; and work was no passive or receptive make-believe; he was using an active, vigorous, and searching mind all the time.

He had few of the gifts of sociability in its ordinary sense, and in all the hours, days, weeks and months that I passed in his company, I recollect no turn for general

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observation, striking or not striking; still less for merely personal talk that sometimes harmlessly fills interspaces of business. Jenkyns did not seem to perceive interspaces. But his cheerfulness of accost, his unsparing energy, and his supreme competency in each of the thousand matters in hand, gave perpetual animation to the company of this most admirable of public servants.

Personalities like his stay longer in our memories than the catalogue of cogent preambles, clauses, amendments, and bills passed or thrown out. Mr. Redmond as Parnellite leader could lend us no help, but he did not show the Parnellite hand more than tactics compelled. Chamberlain, as was to be expected, proved formidable. George Meredith, for once contributing to the literature of electioneering, had described him as "the man of tremendous energy acting on one idea. You see it in the lean, long head and adventurous nose." His sarcasms, as Frenchmen said of Bismarck's, were biting, *narquois*, and approaching *ricanement*.

The usual moments of excruciating anxiety about some critical division were frequent. Redmond one day made a motion for keeping the whole 103 Irish members. I instantly pointed out to Mr. Gladstone that this was the worst possible position for us; the Tories would vote for it, so would the Irish, so would some of our English friends: we should have a majority of 100 against us. "Very well," he said, "then we must accept the 103." Luckily the Irishmen were acute enough to do without our aid. Chamberlain involuntarily helped us; he thought we were dished, and raised a loud crow. This woke up our friends. Those who had been thinking of voting with Redmond, thought so no more. Sexton cleverly got up and declared that he would not wreck the Bill for the sake of twenty more members at Westminster. A good many of his friends were strolling on the terrace, unaware of the abyss yawning at their feet. When the division

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was called, great was the bewildered excitement. "You're all right?" said Balfour to me in a tone of incredulous query as we rose to divide. "By no means sure," said I. Joyful shouts when Marjoribanks received the paper from the clerk. A narrow pass. Mr. Gladstone full of excitement, but suppressed. The rest of the evening pretty steady. Towards the close Balfour read out a strong passage of mine in other days for total exclusion of the Irish representatives—and pressed me to explain why I had changed. I sat silent, instead of saying, as I ought, that I still thought exclusion would have been best, but that I was content to accept provisional inclusion if that was the indispensable condition of Home Rule. From time to time came one of the puerilities that make as agreeable a diversion on this great stage as the fool in an old play. An unwise youthful member asked, for instance, whether I had been correctly reported as having said at Manchester that the House of Lords is impenetrable by argument, represents a mass of selfish prejudice, is hereditary, and so forth, with other stock amenities of the hustings. To his dismay he had no sooner launched than he found each of the culpable sentences punctuated by louder and louder cheers, winding up with uproarious applause. I answered with much urbanity that I found no error in the report, and this was cheered more violently still. The youth did not see that the sting and gall of the very thing was the assurance that our toil was going to be brought to naught by the branch of the legislature in which nationalist Ireland had no single direct voice.

The weeks and months passed by, and the tedium was becoming more and more unbearable as the weather became hotter. The comic paper had a picture of Mr. Gladstone, Harcourt, and me in a boat. Harcourt told me he had laughed heartily at it, as well he might—him sitting idly in

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the bow, Mr. Gladstone and me tugging at our oars. Sitting idly was not by any means the whole story; pulling at other people's rowlocks would have been more graphic; carrying dead weight would have been comparatively easy, and to be of an umbrageous turn does not always mean giving shelter. Undoubtedly weariness was heavy in men's hearts, and our best friends were beginning to wonder whether, like Napoleon, we were not staying too long in Moscow.

Mr. Gladstone, talking to me about closure and other matters and things, gave me some personal counsel which I do not see why I should not recall, though it has an undoubted savour of reproof, and illustrates the saying that there are two species of the unwise—those who give advice and those who do not take it. It may possibly be wholesome for somebody else. He said that he found his memory going for recent and immediate things, and he never could have got on without what he called my thorough knowledge of the Bill. Then he wound up with sudden solemnity: "And now, my dear Morley, there is one more thing I wish to say to you. Take it from me that to endure trampling on with patience and self-control is no bad element in the preparation of a man for walking firmly and successfully in the path of great public duty. Be sure that discipline is full of blessings." To this sound and by no means superfluous admonition I only replied, with a cheerful laugh, that if this were so, it was surely very selfish in us not to give a colleague a fair share in these blessings; and second, that when I thought of the occasional waywardness of my Irish friends, of the prolonged labour of baffling amendments, added to the constant delicacy of Irish government owing to perversity of faction in that island, I felt as if my patience, self-control, and passion for being thoroughly trampled on had altogether not come badly out of it. "Well, well,"

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he said, "when it's all over, you and I must have our controversy out about Horace. I cannot put him as high as you do."

Motions of censure on my Irish administration made for a time weekly refrains. Luckily there was little straw for the manufacture of these particular bricks, and they came to nothing; they only acted as handy drags on the progress of the Bill. I said to Asquith, "I wonder when we come to look back on all this, whether it will figure as a strange nightmare, or a crowded hour of glorious life." "Oh, neither," said he; "only as a part of the regular day's work." Then he quoted the old sixteenth-century jingle:

> Be the day short or never so long,
> At length it ringeth to evensong.

I ought to have remembered that the consolatory jingle is first found on the lips of a martyr on his way to the stake!

Now and then it seemed as if the strain must prove too much even for our indomitable commander. One evening I had to submit some financial puzzles to him. I found him terribly tired, could scarcely walk from his table to the sofa. But he was undaunted; listened to my financial points; one of them staggered him, and he leaned back in heavy weariness. After one or two gigantic yawns, he lighted on a device, and forced his way back to the table, where he jotted down the point on his notes. Then to more work, until at last he fairly gave out, and bade me battle things through with the two great experts at the Treasury. In the middle of his weariness he suddenly broke off into a reminiscence of the first great exposition he had ever had to make in the House of Commons. It concerned his budget of 1853. "It was a tremendously complex and intricate affair, horribly difficult to get into shape. It is just forty years ago. Then, too, the thing was to be done on a Monday. But

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it was April, not February. I remember I woke too early. I went out through the garden door into St. James's Park. The air was fresh, the birds were up, the sky was clear and beautiful, the trees were bursting into leaf—I recollect how glorious it all was." Then with hardly a sigh, he seized hold once more of the intractable financial creature that I had brought him to tame.

At length (July 27) we were out of committee —the 49th sitting, I think, making 68 in all. The fall of the accursed slider, Burke's name for the guillotine, provoked the most violent scenes beheld within those venerable walls since the Civil Wars.

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CHAPTER V

DAYS IN THE PHOENIX PARK

THE benevolence of colleagues and friends favoured us with visits that are a delight to look back upon. I think Rosebery's characteristic consideration made him the first of our guests. We had long and serious talks about Irish and other politics, delightful as talks with him are wont to be even when you don't agree. The weather was not at its best; my own partiality for Dublin is an acquired taste; but the visit may possibly have made him feel that Ireland was by rights a curious sub-species in the Foreign Department. At least it was extremely unlike Midlothian. When the last day of his visit came, he and I walked into Dublin through the Phoenix, the sunlight making even that slightly dingy city pleasant. He went shopping, and I worked away at the Castle all the afternoon. We met at Westland Row, and by 6.30 were half through our meal at the Yacht Club. "There is no brilliant hope for our policy," I confessed. "No, indeed," he said, with sincerity of gloom intensified by all he had seen and heard. That was the only *impression de voyage* with which he favoured me. We walked forth to the steamer, and I bade him good-bye. "I think I know why you came," I said, "and I'm very much obliged to you." The two great black funnels of his ship rose against the bright moon, and remained in my mind's eye until that and the visual eye were both closed in slumber. His

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visit was a cordial proceeding, and warmed our hearts.

October 23, 1893.—Home by six from the Castle to receive our guests: Asquith, Lyall, Armitstead arrived from England, and West joined. Party to dinner—besides the above—Dillon, Col. Lyttelton, Fr. Delany, Tyrrell. Extremely pleasant. Sat up until past one, gossiping. Lyall rather too restive under banter. Not used to the rough-and-tumble ways of the H. of C. or of the Bar. I talked to him about this afterwards. He admitted that he was touchy, and so he is. He agreed that I was not, and I told him that I could stand any amount of chaff, as pungent as you like, with no readiness to scent malice.

Excellently pleasant breakfast talk. Everybody surprised to find me so lively, considering the year's toil and the diabolic circumstances of Irish politics. We all take our turns. Sometimes it is I who run away with the talk; sometimes it is Asquith who calls the tune; sometimes Lyall. We make a capital mixture. The understanding and affinity between Asquith and me, from the intellectual and political point of view, is almost perfect. He is more close in expression than I am, but we both have in different ways the *esprit positif*; we are neither of us optimists; we start from common educational training, though his was in the critical hours of education much better.

Asquith aired a favourite text of his, struck by a remark that the very first thing about a man is that he shall be without affectation. A. an excellent talker—not glittering nor fascinating, nor exactly winning nor inspiring, but genial, clear, competent, and above all, always hitting the nail on the head. Nor must I forget his saying such things as that excellent one about Jowett, that his talk is like one of those wines that have more bouquet than body. A great discussion whether evolution as a doctrine

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would make men more merciful or less. I said more, A. said less. I don't think I made out as much of a case as I might have done, but then I had not been in bed until 4.30 A.M., and had been very busy all day. In the individual of our western world, the doctrine of evolution, by displacing special supernatural providences, if it does anything should strengthen the sense of dependence both on self-help and on the sympathetic help of other people. Christianity, the New Testament, the Golden Rule, are the evangel of Mercy, but then what Lessing said—that Christianity had been tried and failed, the religion of Christ remained to be tried—is hardly less true than it was a hundred years ago. In the relations of States it looks as if Asquith were right. Compare 16th century with 19th. Luther held by Revelation, Grace, Justification by Faith. The fervid apostle of evolution believes in Justification by Success, and the dispensation of the God of Battles. From these puzzles we hastened to the relief of lighter things. On the old question what author one would take to a desert island, Asquith was for Balzac: of course Shakespeare and the Bible are given in, though perhaps not the most read. I said that if I were an imaginative writer, I should hate to be the idol of a London set. I ought to have gone further. The great authors have thought little of any set. The dramatist, novelist—and I won't forget that the greatest of all authors happens to be a dramatist—has to think of stage conditions, and also of pit and gallery. If he does not carry them with him, he fails. To touch, to move, to stir, to please is the end of his art. But the question is not this: it is whether an artist gains or loses by contact with his public. Wordsworth and Tennyson lived apart. Shelley was an exile. Byron spoilt himself, because, though an exile in the flesh, in spirit he was incessantly in Mayfair. George Eliot did

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her best work when she saw company only one night a week, and that company the rarest. I have never known such high perfection of social intercourse as the Thursday dinners at the Priory in days when society let her alone. The guests were always the same, understood one another, spoke the same language, Spencer, Browning, Congreve, Theodore Martin, Harrison; talk of serious things without solemnity; nobody wanting to shine or to carry a point or to interject a last word; all kept in sympathetic play by Lewes's sparkling good-humour.

Intended to have stayed at home all day, but was summoned by the Chancellor to the Council at the Castle, as they thought the voting would be a close shave. It was a question of giving the Catholic bishop of Limerick a victory (cash victory, among other things) over the Protestant dean. Dr. O'Dwyer was present—a short, sturdy man—young, sharp-eyed, strong-chinned, complacent, abundant potentialities of pontifical arrogance. Old Sir P. Keenan said to him, "Look at the Chief Seeretary, he's an Englishman and a gentleman, and you see, in spite of your attacking him, here he comes to support your case. You don't deserve it." The Bishop had made a speech against my action in refusing aid to the Christian Brothers, and was bitterly critical whenever he found a chance. Query, can a bishop be a Fenian, as we know that bishops could once be Jacobites? Well, what do I care? A perversity for which you are completely prepared, actually imparts a sort of buoyancy when it arrives. Even a hair-shirt no doubt has an element of complacency for the man who has put it on from sense of duty.

Hastened home, where Davitt was waiting for me. They had just done luncheon. I swallowed a bite, and then joined them. Davitt, genial, expansive, interesting—about his prison life, about

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the Irish in America, about his travels. A remarkable man. Everybody delighted with him, though I suspect my best of Anglo-Indian bureaucrats had rather a rising in his gorge at the sight of the political ex-convict. What a change in ten years—the Fenian convict walking up the avenue of this Lodge, arm-in-arm with a Chief Secretary. To dinner: Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Wolseley, Chief Baron, the Chancellor, L.J. Fitzgibbon, Jekyll, Harrel. Wolseley on my right and Chief Baron on left. R. between the Lord-Lieutenant and Chancellor. Everybody said it was a success. The only conversational incident that I remember was a remark by the C.B. that no man with plenty of good hard work ever committed suicide. "Castlereagh," said Wolseley in the twinkling of an eye.

Long talk over tobacco, after the grandees had gone. Politics, government, prisons, reminiscences, banter — all unluckily vanished like dreams or bubbles before the next morning, but passing the time agreeably, diffusing pleasant understanding among one another, and sending one to bed with an easy conscience. What is the precise gain of such after-dinner conversations as this? Does anybody really profit by them who does not happen to have a good memory? I am entering this three days after the event, and I declare that nothing remains but general impressions, alike of topics and of interlocutors. How much of a book read after dinner remains for a week? Well, let us beware of the unsociable standard of the pedant who had been carried off to an evening party, and when his family asked on his return home how he had enjoyed it, replied, "If they had been books I would not have opened one of them." The shallow have compared reading to smoking—pleasant, sedative or excitant, but fugitive.

Wednesday, Oct. 25.—At breakfast I submitted that nobody's judgment of a man is so likely to be

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right as that of his official colleagues in his department. I may delude the House of Commons, or constituents, or a public meeting, into thinking me somebody quite different from what I really am. But your office has you at close quarters; every hour of the day it is testing your temper, judgment, tact, industry, insight, foresight, firmness, will, common sense. They seemed to agree, and they are men of experience; whatever else we are, not one of us is mere dilettante.

Took an hour's walk with Asquith. A truly satisfactory man. Takes my view, and the view of everybody else, I should think, that there never was a political prospect so obscure, if only all political prospects were not obscure. We agreed that the chance of a Liberal majority at the general election is uncommonly slender. "Why did they give us one at the last election?" said Asquith. We agreed that a worse stroke of luck than such a majority has never befallen political leaders.

For an hour before dinner A., Lyall, and I had a downright first-rate *causerie* together. Asquith told Mrs. J. afterwards that he had had the most interesting conversation possible, all about Mill and Spencer and others, and we praised our fathers that begat us, plunging into delightful streams of reminiscence and anecdote. It took me more out of myself than anything that has happened to me for a month. While I was dressing for dinner, burdens fell clean off, as one thought of these clear spirits, our teachers, friends, and leaders.

State dinner at the Vice-Regal. About five-and-twenty or more sat down. The V.R. most pleasant, radiant with his best look of humour and friendliness. I sat between two of the most desperate bad comrades that I ever knew — the Obvious babbling on one side, the Morose silent on the other.

Thursday, Oct. 26.—Cheerless weather, but plenty

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of talk indoors. A deputation to the Lodge from Royal Dublin Society. Interview with President of Q.'s College, Cork, waging a war with his professors, like that of Bentley with the fellows of Trinity. H. came up to talk business; stayed to luncheon. The Provost of Trinity came. Very civil of him. No other luncheon-table in Ireland could have Davitt on Tuesday and the Provost on Thursday. Asquith had a talk with H. about the American desperadoes.

An argument with Lyall upon my favourite contention that the great Magistrate has at least as good a title to a front place in the temple of fame, as the highest political servants or leaders of States. "The great Lord Mansfield," for instance, is more worthy of honour and reverence than most of those who are his neighbours among the monuments in Westminster Abbey. What glory to have found the law of evidence of brick and left it of marble! I pulled down the volume of Burke for his encomium on Mansfield, as one whose ideas went to the growing melioration of the law by making its liberality keep pace with justice and the actual concerns of the world—not restricting the infinitely diversified occasions of man, and the rules of natural justice, within artificial circumscriptions, but conforming our jurisprudence to the growth of our commerce and our empire. I fancy that Lyall was for Clive, Hastings, Nelson, Wellington, Wolfe, Walpole, and our other heroes, as above my great Magistrate.

Once more the pleasantest of hours before dressing. Lyall told us some of his experiences in the Mutiny, and Asquith talked about his school-days and his early journalism for *Spectator* and *Economist*. Lyall said much about Stevenson, his prose how excellent—his flexible sentence, apt vocabulary, unexpectedness without affectation, strong effects without toilsome and accumulated

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strokes, delicacy without literary minuet-dancing. Concentration, too, and real things, not piles of words. Mirth and a vivacious classical contentment are the essence of the better kind of art. *J. M.* "Is this true of Millet? I don't see his classical contentment, though I have always delighted to live with examples of his work. I agree, all the same, about Stevenson being subtle, ingenious, humane, sensible, finished, but somewhat wanting the note of great literature, Defoe, Goldsmith, Cervantes. Why?" Talk of pretty names like our Irish Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora, to be matched for ugliness, too, like Ballinamuck onwards.

Went to dine at the Royal Hospital. The bright host and hostess answered brilliantly for our enjoyment. When we got home we had one more good set-to of talk, but I turned them to bed at half-past twelve, as Asquith has to be off betimes in the morning.

Friday, Oct. 27.—Up early to give Asquith his breakfast. We had some intimate talk about one or two things. Among the rest, on the strength of R.'s position—his popularity in Scotland and in London. Seemed to make his hegemony in a certain contingency almost inevitable. He hinted that I might take the F.O. if R. became head of Government, as it would never do to have both Premier and F.O. in the H. of L. I said this would cause a good deal of excitement in a high quarter outside and beyond the Cabinet, referring to an expression used by Mr. G. in a letter to me about this time. So we parted. All our speculations may prove to be the very idlest things that ever were known. On the other hand, with a chief of 84, they may become actual at an hour's notice. On the last painful point, it was about this time that we came in for a specimen of Lord Salisbury's caustic wit. I had thought it expedient to avail

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myself of the rule prescribing retirement at the age of 65 to remove the President of an Irish college. Complaint found its way to the House of Lords. "I observe," said Lord Salisbury, "that the letter directing retirement because the President was 65, is signed by a Secretary who is 70 something, in the name of a First Lord of the Treasury who is 84."

A friend with whom I had been having a talk about English prose, wrote to put to me whether any prose has more exquisite music than the Collects in the Prayer-Book. Must recall them. In a very different connection, recalled Turgot's saying that the greatest evils in life have had their rise from something that was too little to be attended to. This hits a true mark, as applicable to States and the life political on its greatest scale as to the individual in affairs on the smallest.

Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1895.—Wordsworth's *Yarrow Unvisited.* A good big box of papers. Read some memos on Irish Land. Am rather letting the time slip. Ought to have tackled Evicted Tenants before now. Feel an invincible repugnance to touch that desperate business.

In the evening read or skimmed a volume or so of Whately's Life, for the purposes of my Education decision. Dreary book, and a rather unattractive character, with neither intellectual nor moral charm, though plenty of force of a kind. There is a whimsical letter composed of a string of proverbs, which made me laugh. Mentions, to illustrate the necessity under which Commissions find themselves to report, Swift's recommendation to his lady's maid, when sent to open a drawer or box, and unable to find the right key: she is to force one of them into the lock, and wrench till she either opens the drawer or breaks the key, "for your mistress will think you a fool, if you come back and have done nothing." An important description of the

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nature and policy of the Orange faction (i. 127). Not quite so true now of the prevailing state of things, but as true now as then of the Orange spirit to whatever extent it survives.

R. I. C. Barrack, 1894. *Thursday, Oct.* 25.—Splendid morning. Found the Inspector-General in all his glory, sword and plumed hat, on the platform at Westland Row. The visit was very interesting; 500 or 600 men; a mounted troop; recruits, cadets, all in lines, looking as smart a set as could be found in any barrack-yard in this kingdom. I walked down the lines; then they formed square; and I said what I had got to say. Particularly interested by the school, where they are taught and catechised in the whole range of their duties, and the law as it affects them in common circumstances: cruelty to children, licensing, murder and manslaughter, interfering in riot, etc. etc. Then a really first-rate lecture, addressed to them with extraordinary spirit and go by a certain Head Constable S——, a Kerry man. Nothing could be better in its whole spirit and drift: enjoining courtesy to all, poor as much as rich; considerateness to persons charged and persons arrested; the cultivation of comradeship—a complete manual of conduct and good sense, down to changing wet clothes. They are practically all of them the sons of the small farmers. I very honestly congratulated S—— on his lecture.

Read Life of Doyle; Duffy's preface to Davis's Vindication of the Parliament of 1689, written in a loose and unhistoric spirit, in that half-wrangle, half-pathos, apparently so difficult for Nationalists to avoid. If they would only realise, too, that a big word is not always the same as a big thing, though it is sometimes. A. M. Sullivan's *New Ireland*, for instance, is eloquent and well written, but does not escape the disproportionate, over-coloured, and excited style which gives a wholly unreal

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dignity to squalor, and an air of profound policy to mere folly. S. O'Brien, Meagher, and the others were honest lovers of their ill-used land, but we need not talk of them as Richelieus, Mazarins, Hampdens, Pyms. It was no mere fastidious hypercriticism to say of some book of an eloquent Nationalist of to-day that it would not be at all a bad book, if you could only drop a hundred thousand adjectives out of it.

Friday, Oct. 6.—This afternoon our poor little faithful dog was put out of the world. Necessary and humane, but 'tis sorrowful to think of the kind creature, with bright gentle eyes and all her affectionate alacrity, lying cold and stiff under the garden clods. Poor little friend—for so many years. Read Pearson's article on Pessimism. It does not go deep. The best thing that I bring away is a text that he quotes from Ezekiel—"Son of man, behold I take away from thee the delight of thine eyes at a stroke, yet thou shalt neither mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." I wonder what the commentators make of it? No Castle. Read blue-books as to E. T. Then with R. down to Bray, to lunch with Sir J. Mathew. He has hired a lovely place, with spacious lawns, noble trees, and enchanting prospect of the heather-clad mountains—the big and little Sugar-loaves.

Saturday, Oct. 7.—Worked at Evicted Tenants. Bishop of Raphoe to lunch: the youngest of the bishops, and one of the most intelligent. I think a convinced Nationalist—but I'm not sure from what point of view particularly—whether purely ecclesiastical, or racial, social, and political. I opened Evicted Tenants: he thinks we should do well immediately to extend Section 68. Might possibly suffice. About Christian Brothers, struck me as a trifle uneasy, and urged me to see the Archbishop first and foremost, and to seek his

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advice. A rather interesting conversation about Protestantism and Catholicism. Said he did not believe he had ever heard a polemical sermon in his life. Gave me an account of the course at Maynooth. The whole thing complete covers ten years. I said I was always impressed by the majestic history, the pomp, the breadth and system, the stupendous and fast-compacted fabric. "Yes," said he, "but the real thing in it all, which escapes the non-Catholic and which he never knows, is the individual life—the life religious." At the end I said to him: "I do justice to you in history—but still—still—I'm afraid of you." I thought of a certain speech that I put into the mouth of Chaumette long ago. I thought also of the constant warnings of my French friends, that I idealised the Church, bishops included, and forgot the Inquisition, Jesuitism, Ultramontanism, Infallibility. During the time when I was exercised about Christian Brothers, we paid a holiday visit to Rome, and it was arranged that I was to have an audience of the Pope. In an improvident hour I went first to pay my respects to King Umberto, with whom I had a genial talk about Garibaldi and Cavour: Mazzini much less in favour. Then I found out that the foreigner who goes to the Quirinal first cannot be received at the Vatican after. So I had to content myself with the Black Pope, the Father-General of the Jesuits, a Spaniard. We got on well enough about Christian Brothers, Orangemen, and the other mysteries of Irish government. We parted with the most prodigious compliment ever paid by any Father-General to any Agnostic: "During the rest of your stay in Rome, your Excellency will be good enough to regard my Society as wholly at your command!"

Kilmainham.

March 31, 1894.—I must not forget that I began the day with a pilgrimage to Kilmainham Gaol—a

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gloomy, squalid pile. Saw the rooms occupied by Parnell, and the yard in which all Forster's suspects exercised themselves: high, ugly, grey stucco walls. Went out by a double-locked low door and grating into a smaller yard, and found myself face to face with the blackness of the gallows. I had never seen this resource of civilisation before. 'Twas here that the Park murderers were hanged. Their bodies were buried under the flags of the yard, nameless. I remember that one of the band, the youngest of them, could never be got to melt or show any sign of contrition. The day before his execution he was taking his exercise: he heard a noise of digging and shovelling earth; he was told, or guessed, that they were busy about Brady's grave. Brady had been hanged that morning. K. prayed to be taken into his cell, and flung himself on his pallet in a paroxysm of tears. X., who first secured a scent, told me all about it and showed me where M. overheard Carey's confession. I went into one or two cells, where untried prisoners were locked up: one of them pretty sure to be hanged for murdering an old woman. In large letters carved high on the wall of the central hall, "God is Love." Rather incongruous! My thought as I came away, "Why am I out, and they in?" And so I found myself in the eternal coil of responsibility, will, fate, cause and effect, right and wrong, and the rest of the everlasting puzzle. The gallows gives peculiar actuality to metaphysical puzzles.

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1894.—Went over Mountjoy Prison—the convict prison for Ireland—382 males. A repulsive business, but they seem to make the best of it. They set them to various trades—shoe-making, tailoring, weaving, mat-making, etc.—and industry gets its reward, to say nothing of a roof over its head, a sure dinner, and warmth. The sorry people knew who I was, for one of them

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begged to be allowed to speak to me. He had been condemned to death for murdering his wife; respited; had served ten years of the life sentence; wanted to go to Canada with his two daughters, one twenty and the other fifteen; his old father still alive, aged 90; had sent £10 for their emigration expenses. I had the case carefully looked into, and satisfied myself, and the officials also, that clemency of the Crown would do no harm. So they were packed off to gladden the eyes of the ancient patriarch in Canada. The Governor told me most of his flock were great readers. I looked into the library and found books like Macaulay's *Essays* well thumbed. Other history, they told me, was very popular.

Worked away at the Castle. To dinner, the Lytteltons and Fr. Delany. Pleasant talk about the usual topics. Among other things Miss Barlow's *Irish Idylls*. I said how much I liked the workmanship, but had she not left out or softened away the sullen and harsh element, that always strikes me as a substratum in so much of Irish life and character? Fr. Delany admitted there might be a fault of this kind. Though he began life as a Tory, was evidently glowing with hatred of the enormities of the old landlords and agents.

Wednesday, Sept. 27.—At 11 to the Congested Districts Board. An interesting priest came before us, with a scheme for giving prizes for clean cottages, well-kept land, etc. etc. Told us of a highly successful case in a former parish of his in Mayo, where he had carried out a purchase operation for tenants; all had gone capitally, instalments accurately paid up, land improved, men improved. An excellent fellow, I should say, Father O'Hara. I afterwards made him a member of the Board.

Then to the School of the Christian Brothers in Richmond Street. Bro. Swan, the head of it, a very good fellow, I should think. Sexton had

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spoken well of him to me. My object was to see the burning question of emblems in the convents. Decidedly there was what is called a Catholic atmosphere: a statue of the B.V.M. in all the rooms in a commanding position—benign patroness of the work in hand. None of the nausea of crucifixion, bleeding hearts, etc. In one set of rooms they carry on what is called intermediate education and receive public grants; in the other, it is business; though so is the other too, for that matter, yet to have to give grants would be anathema, as inconsistent with the mixed system—that system so blessed as an ideal, so impossible and practically so non-existent in Ireland. Two little Protestants in the school, taking no material harm, I'll be bound. Swan gave me a history of the Institute—started by a citizen of Waterford, no very great number of years ago; used to work in England; now in Ireland, Colonies, India. The brother who showed me round had been thirty years at work in India.

Visited Convent School in King's Inn Street. Shown round by sister in charge—such a comely, young, bright, kindly creature: kind eyes, pleasant voice, lively sympathetic ways, and a touch of Irish accent. This is a school under the National Board, and therefore no emblems in a technical sense. But plenty of holy pictures, and the good women themselves in nun's full uniform, with brass crucifixes dangling down and rosaries at their girdle. Not a Protestant child in the school, and the atmosphere as Catholic as you please. How many hundred times have I heard about Catholicism being much more a whole and minute and pervasive system of life than Protestantism seems to afford! But then the Protestant would say he is himself, not the servant of another man.

Same thought on my visit to the school and training-college in Bagot Street. Delighted with

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the training-college, airy, spacious, clean. Can well understand the eagerness for admission. Young women come up from all parts of Ireland, rough and unkempt; are put into the civilising mill; music, books, baths, infinite tidiness and order, and the friendly guidance and sympathy of the reverend mothers and sisters. I must say that these women please me vastly. Their atmosphere is human; they are keen about their work; it is all moving and alive with sympathy; not mechanical, all chalk and blackboard. I do not wonder any more at what I heard in Newcastle once, that Protestant workmen often prefer the nuns' schools—the manners are thought to be so much softer.

Friday, Sept. 29.—To the Church of Ireland School and training-college in Kildare Place. The Principal, an old Balliol man. Very pleasant and civil. Showed me over the class-rooms. A few texts about—"Jesus is my Rock," etc. Texts must be approved by the N. Education Board! Such is the watchful jealousy of the sects! Thence to the godless Marlbro' Street—the famous centre of the mixed system. Since the R.C. bishops have declared war against teachers trained here, there has been a terrible falling off in R.C. students.

The Seven Churches, September 1894.—On Friday we made an expedition to Glendalough and the Seven Churches. Wicklow a beautiful county. If one sought *recueillement* I should wish no better hermitage than the hotel at Glendalough; delicious walks in meadows and open woods on the banks of the running stream, and surrounded by the folds of hills of exquisite form, clad with wood, gorse, heather, and here and there a little alp of vivid green on the shoulder of high-wooded slopes.

Though the political temperature was too hot for me to be welcome at all the miscellaneous hospitalities for which Dublin was famous, I had

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a share. I once sat peaceably at meat at the metropolitan Archbishop's table with all the Catholic prelates, and did my best not to show myself unworthy of their geniality and lively good-humour. Sir Walter Scott was never sure whether the wigs or the wits were the better company in Edinburgh. In Dublin in my short day the wigs had the best of it, in spite of two of the College professors, and the casual soldier, too, was a welcome element that in London, Oxford, or Cambridge has not always been so general a social contributor. The Provost of Trinity made an admirable host for scholars, soldiers, and divines alike.

One evening I recall with three or four of the best of the judges, including the Chief Baron. The trite question arose of allowing prisoners to give evidence; G., C., and M. dead against; the Kerry peasant would hang himself in five minutes. C.B. the other way. It really depends which maxim you adopt as paramount—(1) anything rather than the innocent man should suffer; (2) anything provided the guilty man shall be caught. They said Irish sentences much more lenient than English: only chance of getting juries to convict.

Of the Land Act of 1896 the judges said it was the worst-drawn Act they ever had to deal with. Perhaps they meant no more than that it had stopped every landlord earth. The company included a young lady who had been acting in some tableaux, and came to dinner in the dress of a Galway fishwife—red petticoat, grey-blue stockings, red handkerchief over black hair, fine eyes, and lively expression. Extremely pleasant evening—such is the virtue of a red petticoat, when one is deep in law points. The best of law points, in truth, was a story. A peasant was in the dock for a violent assault. The clerk read the indictment with all its legal jargon. The prisoner to the

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warder: "What's all that he says?" *Warder*: "He says ye hit Pat Curry with yer spade on the side of his head." *Prisoner*: "Bedad an' I did." *Warder*: "Then plade not guilty." This dialogue loud in full hearing of the Court.

A municipal feast at the Mansion House was interesting for more reasons than one, including the curious underlying, and, if you like, irrational foreign feel. Fine room, panelled with dark oak. About 150 guests of all sorts and persuasions, but no anti-P. Member of Parliament. John Redmond at the top of the long table close to me. Had plenty of talk with him, during dinner and after. Also with Dr. Shaw (who told me he had been picking sugar-plums out of my Robespierre for Archbishop Walsh), and others, including a fine specimen of the clever, impudent, lawyer type. Enjoyed the novelty of it immensely—such a change from the groove in which I live and move. Asked Redmond whether he thought any good would come of a talk between us as to the Bill. He asked what I thought. I said I doubted in view of his speeches. He said he doubted also. In full truth, I don't doubt. No good would come, and it would be extremely perilous.

Killiney, 1895. *Monday, Jan.* 22.—Glorious morning. Irish papers all well pleased by my answer to the deputation. Read Wordsworth's two poems on Burns; kind, merciful, steady, glowing, manly they are, with some strong phrases, good lines, and human feeling all through, winding up in two stanzas at the close. These are among the pieces that make Wordsworth a poet to live with; he repairs the daily wear and tear, puts back what the fret of the day has rubbed thin or rubbed off, sends us forth in the morning *whole*.

Read Goldwin Smith on the Irish question in a newly published volume of political essays. A narrow piece of work; full of hard, bitter feeling,

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obscuring and manacling his judgment. Canning said not so long before he became head of the Government that the Catholic question "must win, not force its way." Who was the more of a statesman, Canning or O'Connell? Goldwin very unhistoric in spirit, and, what is more rare in him, essentially unpolitical: I mean he shows no perception of necessities and practical limitations; makes no allowances for inveterate antecedent circumstance; is conscious of no responsibility for showing a way out of difficulties; treats the problem as neither capable of solution nor requiring solution. This I call essentially a non-political performance. He hints that I am for H. R. because I am ignorant of Ireland. His own personal knowledge of Ireland seems to have been acquired in a very short visit to a Unionist circle here thirty years ago! What can be more shallow and ill-considered than to dismiss O'Connell "as an agitator, not a statesman." O'Connell's noble resolution, insight, persistency in lifting up his Catholic countrymen, in giving them some confidence in themselves, in preaching the grand doctrine of union among Irishmen, and of toleration between the two creeds, in extorting justice from England and the English almost at the point of the bayonet—all this stamps O'Connell as a statesman and a patriot of the first order. "I shall never get the credit that I deserve for Catholic Emancipation," he once said, "because future times will never know the wretched material with which I had to work."

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CHAPTER VI

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

What a wonderful incongruity it is for a man to see the doubtfulness in which things are involved, and yet be impatient or vehement in it.—BUTLER.

I

1894. WHEN the Bill had met its fate, its author began silently to revolve the question of his own continuance in command. A sharp controversy within the Cabinet brought the question to an issue. Naval estimates were proposed by Lord Spencer. The Prime Minister judged them to be grossly excessive. The Admiralty was urgent, and Spencer was by temperament obstinate. He carried a decided majority of the Cabinet with him. Time passed; a series of singular perplexities ensued.

We had a Cabinet on January 9, 1894. Accommodation on Navy estimates seeming to be out of reach, was the decision on the ulterior consequence of the fact capable of delay? Could this be postponed until February 15? It was decided to adjourn, and we were informally to consider this point among ourselves. An item or two from my Diary may record the course of incident:

"Rosebery took me up to B. Square in his brougham, and Asquith followed. We talked away without saying anything, as men are so curiously able to do. The view undoubtedly was that now is the accepted time for our chief's resignation; that it would be against Mr. G.'s honour to remain at the

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head of the Government while the estimates of which he disapproved were actually being framed; that the delay in reconstruction would fatally mutilate the new session; and all the other arguments.

"To H. of C. A good many Irish questions, which I answered as I best could. Mr. G. on the bench, in a perfectly matter-of-fact humour to all outer seeming. He said to me, 'Pray, come and dine to-night, if you can. Only the family, and I will tell you my estimate of the Cabinet.' Much buzzing among the Cabinet men, coming to my room and talking things over and over. Most of them were at this stage of affairs *This-Weekers* and not *Next-Monthers*, *i.e.* for a definitive Cabinet on Thursday or Friday followed by the Prime Minister's immediate retirement. Only one minister, L——, was willing to entertain Mr. G.'s own plan, or to go against the Admiralty figures. Presently it came rather more into our minds that a ministerial crisis and the withdrawal of Mr. G. might let in Lord Salisbury. The Q. might send for him and he might dissolve, leaving our Parish Councils Bill planted. Or he might be emboldened, even if we remonstrated, to spoil the Bill. That argument began to spread a little. Still, I don't think it substantially diverted the current in favour of resignation this week.

"To dine in Downing Street. Armitstead and Lord Ronald Gower the only other guests. Mr. G. not in his gay mood, but still perfectly cheerful and full of talk, only no flow; it was an atmosphere of preoccupation. R. G., by the way, asked him whether it would not be worth while to publish a life of his uncle, Lord Morpeth, afterwards Lord Carlisle, the Lord Lt. of Ireland. Mr. G. politely snuffed the notion out. 'A biography, unless it is of some very great man indeed, is only sure of a public at the time of the man's death.' He cited the complete lack of interest in Sir Robert Peel's

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papers, just edited, and extremely well edited, by Charles Parker.

"After dinner, in the drawing-room, he at once sat down to backgammon with Armitstead. Mrs. G. carried me to a sofa behind an ornamental glass screen, and I then found, with a minute of consternation, that I was to tell her the fatal news. Mr. G. had said to her, on his return from the House, that I was coming to dine; that he was fagged, and that I would tell her how things stood. It was as painful as any talk could be. However, I had no choice. I told her that the reign was over, and that the only question was whether the abdication should be now or in February. The poor lady was not in the least prepared for the actual stroke. Had gone through so many crises, and they had all come out right in the end; had calculated that the refreshment of the coming journey to Biarritz would change his thoughts and purpose. I told her that language had been used which made change almost impossible. Well, then, would not the Cabinet change, when they knew the perils with which his loss would surround them? I was obliged to keep to iron facts. What a curious scene! I breaking to her that the pride and glory of her life was at last to face eclipse, that the curtain was falling on a grand drama of fame, power, acclamation; the rattle of the dice on the backgammon board, and the laughter and chucklings of the two long-lived players, sounding a strange running refrain.

"This, however, was not the end. The final stage did not arrive for several weeks. Three or four of them he passed at Biarritz (Jan. 13–Feb. 10), but with little gain of composure. His colleagues in Whitehall were in dire perplexity, as the session rapidly approached. Some of them regaled themselves with verse. One recalled Johnson's fine lines on those fortunate men 'who sit unclouded in the gulfs of Fate.' Another applied to him, as more to

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the point, Blair's verse: 'Behold him in the evening time of life. . . . By unperceived degrees, he wears away. Yet like the Sun, seems larger at his setting.' The Prime Minister himself suggested an immediate dissolution. It was curious enough, he argued, that if it was really desirable that he should appear before the country at a dissolution, and that should be now, the Lords had taken the steps that might bring it now. A prompt submission to the nation of a group of questions which, taken together, amount to this, whether the people of this island are or are not to be a self-governing people. General disfavour greeted this idea among us at Whitehall.

"I came back from Ireland to meet him on his return from Biarritz. I went to him at once. It was a Sunday afternoon. There the old fellow was, doing what old fellows have done for long ages on a Sunday afternoon, reading a big Bible. Open on the table was Taine's final volume—the pages on the Church. He complained that after three pages of it, his eyes were done. I thought him looking extraordinarily well—quite different from what he was when I saw him off at Charing Cross.

"He revived the notion of a speedy dissolution. I said I was against it, mainly on the ground that electoral reform was the best field on which we could try a good square throw with the Lords. Everybody understands registration and the rest of it; such things come home to electors. He admitted there was some force in this, but thought that the wrecking of the work of a whole session was a neat compact sort of crime, to make the foundation of a grand charge. Thought the prospect of our living through the session extremely doubtful. I demurred. How are they to turn us out? He could only say that we should surely find something of a peace party, and if so, a clever Tory amendment might ensnare them. I said that I didn't believe

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this. About my own position, I put it plainly once more in this way: 'I stay, because if I were to resign on ships, you would have to resign on ships too, and that would wreck the party. If I resign on ships, you cannot resign on eyes and ears. But that is what, exactly to save the party, you desired to do. Therefore, on Irish grounds I stay. . . .' About France he said: 'If I had a confidential French friend, I should say to him that I regarded you as holding identical opinions with my own on France, and her relations with us, and on foreign policy generally.' After an hour, I went into the drawing-room. No politics, only weather. After a few minutes Mr. G. came and took me back for one more point. It proved to be an explanation of what line he should take as member of the H. of C. He did not feel that the same considerations of eyes and ears which warranted him in leaving office, bound him to leave Parliament; he should not attend often; if his opinion were challenged, he should say he was only answerable to his constituents, and so on—a very perilous outlook, I should say.

"We all knew how sure it was to come out that he was for dissolution, and it was the Cabinet who feared it. It would of course be said and believed that he was edged out by the ambition and restlessness of colleagues. Asquith warned me that I should be shot at first and foremost—his own familiar friend—the depositary of his counsels—the sharer of his deepest thoughts and policies—the man who agreed with him as to this very issue of the ships and the millions and the European peace. I suppose that will prove true, and that I shall be charged with deserting him and sacrificing my convictions for office. Well, they may say what they like. I have to go on living some years, D.V. How could I face the memory of having a second time been his active coadjutor in breaking up the party? And how should I feel as to Ireland? Ireland, that

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is my pole-star of honour, even if I were to know that I am driving straight on to failure.

"On February 1, the Irish view of resignation was presented to me by one of the leaders. He drew a terrific picture of the pain and anger that Mr. G.'s retirement would create in Ireland. Helps one to realise what he is to Home Rule and to Ireland. 'It is not the Bill. It is the man. He is the personification of their cause before Europe and the world. For him deliberately to step down and desert them will be regarded as the crowning betrayal of Ireland by England. By their cause, I don't mean a Parliament on College Green. It is resistance to the bullying agents, swaggering landlords, braggart Orangemen—that is the cause. His voluntary disappearance would be the triumph of this whole gang of oppressors.'

"A fortnight of curious interludes came next. There was a Cabinet dinner (Feb. 17). It was expected that the Prime Minister would tell us that he was going at once to resign; was he going to say what we were to set about doing or not doing? I met a political lady in the afternoon, driving out of Downing Street. 'Don't you remember,' she asked me, 'the last scene in *Lucrezia Borgia*; they were all feasting and singing, *Il segreto per esser felice*, and in rushes Lucrezia, telling them they are all dead men?' Things did not run out altogether so. We ate our dinners expectantly; the coffee found the oracle still dumb; and in good time a crestfallen flock departed. Six days later (Feb. 23) a Cabinet. At the close of the business he said in a quiet, ordinary voice something to the effect that when the prorogation speech was settled it was understood that the moment would have come 'to end his co-operation with the members of the Cabinet.' The words fell like ice on men's hearts, there was an instant's hush, and we broke up in funereal groups. The end came a week later,

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and the last Cabinet was held. When the business was over, Kimberley, as our senior, said his words of farewell. But almost in an instant the honest fellow's voice gave way; he bravely forced out a few broken sentences—good honest sentences they were—and not without tears he came to a stop. His unaffected and manly emotion touched every one of us to the core. Harcourt followed in words expressive of his feeling of the privilege he had enjoyed in lightening Mr. Gladstone's toil, and the grief with which he should realise that the congenial task was at an end. Mr. Gladstone, who had sat composed and still as marble, closed the scene in a little speech of four or five minutes—the sentences of most moving cadence, the voice unbroken and serene, the words and tones low, grave, and steady. He referred to differences upon a question of vital moment, and upon a decision which he could not but regard as fraught with disaster. But 'those who could no longer co-operate with honour, could at least part in honour.' He was glad to know that he had justification in the condition of his senses. He was glad, too, to think that in spite of vital difference on a public question, private friendship would remain unaltered and unimpaired. Then he said in a tone hardly above a breath but every accent heard, 'God bless you all!'

"The ceremonial of changing seals at Windsor has often been recorded, and Lord Rosebery kissed hands as new head of the Government.

"We all, or most of us, met the same evening at an official dinner given by Kimberley as Lord President. No discredit to the host, his kitchen or his cellar, the meal was not convivial. We were out of a prolonged and severe ordeal, and even those of us whose rule of life was never to look back upon action that could not be revoked, may have mused over the chances of a future ordeal severer still."

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II

The choice of a successor made an episode that no one of the prominent actors in it could or can pretend to look back upon with unalloyed satisfaction. I saw Mr. Gladstone on the afternoon when he was starting for Windsor to tender his resignation (March 2). He had some reason to suppose that the Queen might ask him for advice as to his successor. "If you were in my place, now, whom would you advise?" *J. M.* "If I were in your place, considering the difficulties and embarrassments of personal questions, I should be disposed to decline advice." *Mr. G.* "No, I could not do that. It would not be consistent with my view of my duty not to advise if invited." *J. M.* "Then I am bound to say that, though it is not ideal, and has many elements of danger to policies that you and I care for, I should advise Rosebery." *Mr. G.* "I shall advise Spencer." These were pretty nearly the exact words used by each of us, but of course there were longish pauses, and the delicacy of the matter made us deliberate.

Reconstruction of a ministry necessarily turns upon personalities, and therefore cannot always be edifying. For us to throw down the reins would be as cowardly as it was in Pitt's colleagues, on their leader's death in 1806. We were under a special moral obligation to the Irish, because it was reliance on our fidelity and honour that had induced them to part company with their own chief. The difficulties were obvious. When Lord Derby retired from his third premiership in 1867, Disraeli was leader of the House of Commons, and for other reasons there could be no dispute as to the succession. Mr. Gladstone left no leader in the Commons. Harcourt had now no rival in experience of public life, in force as a debater, in mastery of parliamentary tactics, in unflinching devotion to his

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party, in constant attention and industry. "You and I," he once said to me, who only half deserved the compliment, "are the only regular professional politicians in our camp." His conversion to the new Irish policy in 1886 had been as rapid as the conversion of other people; his adhesion to it in the Cabinet had been undisguisedly chilling.

It would be unjust to Harcourt to compare him as a colleague with Brougham, though they had common traits. Some detached observers bethought themselves of an incident in the life of the wayward Lord Chancellor of the old days. Brougham, after he was left out of Lord Melbourne's reconstructed Government in 1835, made a speech in the House of Lords of such extraordinary vehemence and power that Melbourne followed by asking how a man endowed with the singular qualities that made him capable of such a performance was yet not deemed by his colleagues of value enough to be retained among them? How ill, then, must our own strong parliamentarian's cards have been played since the opening of the Parliament in 1892. At that moment colleagues had begun with every good feeling towards him, with the natural expectation that as the senior, the most experienced, and the most competent for parliamentary purposes of all the men sitting with him on the Liberal front bench of the House of Commons, his succession was naturally to be expected. Yet with full consciousness of the obvious disadvantages of a premier in the House of Lords, still they could not agree to take service under him. How came such gifts, claims, and work as his to miscarry just when the prospects of his most natural ambition were so promising? The short answer is that, though he was a large-hearted man and a warm-hearted man, and a man of commanding parliamentary power, he was daily liable to moods that made him difficult. The Parliament was not to his mind, still less was

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the size of the majority; he was not sustained by enthusiasm for the main article of policy; he missed old stable companions, and did not take to all of the new. Though conscious of excitability of temperament in himself, he was not tolerant either of excitability or of the sluggish lack of it in others. Nobody will wonder if all this was found especially disconcerting and gratuitous, in the very hardest weather against which any set of British ministers ever were forced to put to sea.

Nothing could go more against the grain with me than to record these events, but what happened and why it happened were questions that drew much comment, and may again. He and I had incessant conversations of perfect candour, not, I believe, in the least discreditable to either of us. I reminded him of Burke's pithy and sensible saying that the complaints of a friend are very different from invectives of an enemy. I reminded him also of what Scott said of Canning in 1827, that with his immense talent, wit, and eloquence, he unhappily wanted prudence and patience. It does not need the genius of Scott to tell us that a cloudless temper is a wonderful asset in the cast of political parts. It needs no profound observer to realise that public life upon the summits is apt to have its cruel hours. "Oh, I know," he said, "but you must blame Nature; *tamen usque recurret.*" *J. M.* "I don't presume to blame either gods or demigods. But business is business; and, as some sage has observed, Nature says, take all but pay." He insisted that honestly he did not want to be in the first place, or head of the Government. In fact it was quite true that in the sagacious depths of his mind he felt that anything like party strength and unity was irrecoverable, and why should he enter into vehement competition for the first place in association with the wreckage? Still, one knew that the ordinary superficial ambitions are apt to outrun sagacious

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depths. The leader of the House of Commons, he said, must be the real head of the Government when our party is in power, whoever be the titular head. The reality of authority must be there. At the same time he did not at all deny the advantage of the leader of the House of Commons being also the titular leader of the party. If it were not that it would sound like advocacy of personal claims, he should have a vast deal to say on this: the enormous difficulty of keeping our groups together, which is barely overcome even by Mr. Gladstone himself, would be increased tenfold, if there were not plenary authority in the leader. The new leader of the House of Commons will have an almost impracticable task at best. At any rate he was old, and knew how to distinguish tinsel from substance. *J. M.* "My dear Harcourt, forgive me for being frank. But you deceive yourself. You do want to be leader. You are a proud man. You are aristocrat to your finger-tips. People may say *Stemmata quid faciunt* if they like, but your *stemma* interests you immensely. [What is the use of genealogies?] Quite right too. You have had a Chancellor in your family, and a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and you'd like to have a Prime Minister in your family, and no earthly blame to you. The thing for us and for the party has a double aspect, how we can best carry on our fight in the House of Commons between now and the dissolution, and how we can offer the best front when the election comes. From the first point of view you are neither more nor less than indispensable; from the second, the advantages are with Rosebery."

This was undoubtedly the dominant view of the leading junta inside the Cabinet—I mean Spencer, Asquith, Acland, and myself—though, as was to be expected amid so much uncertainty and distraction, feeling wavered from day to day. But the tremble was slight, and the hand of the barometer returned

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to a steady point. Rosebery, in spite of what would have been a perfectly natural and justified ambition, was far too acute not to be fully alive to the difficulties with which any Liberal prime minister in the Lords would have to grapple, and far too careful by temperament actively to covet such a post. It fell to me to see him constantly through this agitating time. Clearer than any of us, he saw and felt the force of the various changes in our Continental relations, and the immense difficulty of adjusting them to the temper of our party. It was wide insight and no pusillanimity that made him slow to yield to our pressure. From Mr. Gladstone's last Cabinet, Rosebery, Spencer, and I walked away together, on our way to Berkeley Square, where Asquith and Acland joined us and we had our luncheon. I had already written to Rosebery in the morning that he must really let us know *firm*, whether he was prepared to form a Government at all costs. It would never do for me to lead the Irish in a certain direction, if after all my pains we were in that direction to be left in the lurch. Spencer now pointedly put this to him, and Acland pressed it home. Asquith was of the same mind. Rosebery at last definitely accepted the obligation, and agreed that he would under any circumstances undertake to go on with the task, if the Queen sent for him. Our satisfaction at this advance towards daylight was somewhat alloyed the same night by news from the House of Commons. There was a revolt; a certain group of Liberal members, with a chartered malcontent at their head, had come to the senior Whip to make a protest against a peer premier. Asquith and I thought it of little significance, but Tweedmouth, the Whip, though one of the most courageous of men, was considerably perturbed.

In these trying days I had many visits from the most confidential emissary that Harcourt could

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possibly have chosen — in many ways cleverer, neater, more astute, diplomatic, and far more resolute than Harcourt himself. He assured me that if my mind turned that way, nothing would be more exactly what the Chancellor desired than that I should go to the Exchequer, and I could either bring in the Budget myself or, to begin with, play the part of Goulburn to Peel. In this case, if I became the second man in the House of Commons —the first man, moreover, being eleven or twelve years older—that was a clear gain for the cause of Home Rule, and the Irish would be quite sharp enough to see it. Under all the circumstances the political reader will agree that this was a completely honourable and fair-minded proposal of Harcourt's, and neither calls for nor in truth admits a word of cynical comment. It was very much the arrangement that had seemed most natural in our Malwood days, before their harmony was impaired by the untoward experiences of 1893–94.

Sunday, March 4.—A curious move now began from the Exchequer. By nine I had a note from Harcourt begging me to go to see him about our action in respect of Foreign Secretary in the Lords. I replied that I was going to use a day of Sabbatic calm in viewing the whole position, and that I would come to see him later. By eleven there came a line from Loulou, urging me to go soon, as his father was to see Rosebery very shortly. This was to secure the point that the leader of the H. of C. was to see all telegrams and despatches of the F.O. It was important that he and I should meet first. It would be better, I said, that we should take independent action. Harcourt at once drove up to B. Square, surrendered the point, and generally fell in with a Rosebery premiership. No doubt, if I had joined him in making a protest against a Foreign Secretary in the Lords, with a definite refusal to join unless that point were conceded, this, as R.

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afterwards told me, would have broken off the plan, and he would have thrown up his task. It seems curious that none of us realised how essentially fatal to the very idea of a sound and workable arrangement was the difference between two schools of imperial policy.

That imperfectly considered step once irrevocably done with, I enjoyed some hours of peace and solitude. I walked round to see a political neighbour, a shrewd and cool head, with some kind feeling for me, and capable in spite of shrewdness and coolness of imagination and ideals. I said bluntly, "Shall I give up the Irish Office?" At first he took the commonplace point of view, that having gone in for politics, I ought to follow the rules and take every upward step that came. Gradually, however, he worked away from this; began to glow a little; and at last took fire, and I walked away full of virtuous resolve to stand to Ireland.

Towards four in the afternoon Spencer came. Much alarm felt at B. Square and by himself at the news brought by Acland that I would not join if the F.O. arrangement for Kimberley were persisted in. We argued the matter pretty closely. S. leaned heavily on the personal point, that Kimberley ought to be compensated for his supersession as leader in the Lords. I resisted this. At length he said that if I did not join, neither would he. I protested against this responsibility being cast on me, and began to waver. He proposed that we should go to Rosebery. R. would have been to see me, but was beset by business. Just before we started, in comes Loulou to say that his father had seen R., had discussed terms, and had joined.

Meanwhile off went Spencer and I in a hansom to B. Square. R. very pleasant. Others came in. He and I withdrew to the inner room. We

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discussed the matter of the F.O. Rather than have a Harcourt Government, I gave way, partly on the consideration that Kimberley would be a good enough minister, but mainly because I could not break up the best scheme of a new administration on a narrow and not popularly intelligible, though substantially an important, point. He then asked me whether I would stay in Ireland or go to India. I said that frankly I was divided. The Irish would really not thank me; would not be at all sorry for a change; Ireland tosses on her bed and finds relief in change; restive and restless; would be all the better pleased to find a more malleable man. "Would you come and dine to-night," he asked, "and we can talk it over?" I agreed. Meanwhile went to make a call at Downing Street: Mr. G. gone to church. I said that I rather wanted to ask him a question which I was pretty sure that he would peremptorily decline to answer.

Home to dress. My wife urgent that I should leave Ireland. Pursued me even to my dressing-room, and plied me with friendly appeals. When I left the house, I was pretty well fixed for India. Who would thank me for staying? Who would think the worse of me for going? That way the balance inclined. Political instinct, as I told Asquith yesterday, beckoning one way; weariness of the flesh tugging me in the other.

I found R. already at table with his two girls, taking their supper: all absolutely easy and as usual. The girls went, and we talked over the incidents of the day and of other recent days. *R.* "And now about Ireland. I do hope you will not leave your post." *J. M.* (head plunged between his hands) "Do not ask me that." So we drove into the arguments, threadbare by now. He naturally looked at nothing but the convenience and interest of his Government. I cannot blame him. I told him I had left tears of vexation in my

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home at the thought. He offered that I should be Lord President or Privy Seal, if I thought that would add lustre or importance to the Irish post. *J. M.* "No, no, if I take the post, I want no artificial decorations; if I take it, I take it. If I take it," said I, "you will understand that I bargain that I am not to be asked to take part in any un-Irish debate, nor to make one single speech in the country; I will lock myself fast in the Irish back-kitchen." And so, ostensibly and superficially under pressure from him, but fundamentally because conscience and instinct were pulling me by secret and resistless force the same way, I agreed, and the decision was made. He ordered his phaeton, and off we drove in the darkness and east wind to my house, talking about all sorts of things. His last word, as I got to my door, was that he could not tell me how grateful he was for the service I was rendering and the sacrifice I was making. I replied that in affairs of this gravity and moment, it was no question of gratitude. He had previously said that he would write to my wife to explain and to palliate. To which I also replied that these concerns of State were not to be settled on the principles of the domestic affections. R. said it would be right to put it in the newspapers next day, that I might have been a Secretary of State if I liked. "Do no such thing, I really beg of you," cried I, with half-angry sincerity. My protest notwithstanding, the thing was officially in print next day; that though offered a Secretaryship of State I had felt it my duty to decline any post which at this juncture might separate me from the cause of Ireland. I found R. and G. sitting up. They knew very well what to expect. "It's precious hard lines," cried G. with youthful vehemence. "I knew you would," said R. with profound vexation in her voice.

The new Government sailed out on the crest of the wave, and the very next day found itself in the

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trough of a boiling sea. The new Premier had let slip to the Lords a sentence about England being the predominant partner, whose assent was requisite for Irish self-government. This made it certain that our Irish friends would bear down upon us without loss of an hour.

March 13, 1894.—At one indued myself in uniform for the Levee, and so to Berkeley Square. R. not particularly agitated, though he knew pretty well that he had been indiscreet. "I blurted it out," he said. "For Heaven's sake," said I, "blurt out what you please about any country in the whole world, civilised or barbarous, except Ireland. Irish affairs are the very last field for that practice." *R.* "You know that you and I have agreed a hundred times that until England agrees, H. R. will never pass." *J. M.* "That may be true. The substance of your declaration may be as sound as you please, but not to be said at this delicate moment." Neither of us made any fuss about it, but discussed coolly as we drove down to St. James's what might be the proper form of extrication. The D. of York's first Levee. A great number of nauticals. A few words with Balfour. He told me that Randolph was going to make a speech two hours long. "What about?" I asked. "Heaven only knows," he said. I then told him that a lady who was a friend of his in the gallery last night had told me that what most interested her was my physiognomy while he was speaking—the look of pride as of an elder brother on one who knew his business and was doing it in good style. A. B. laughed most joyfully. H. of C.—The Irish in a wild state of perturbation, anger, and panic at the unhappy sentence in the Lords. I did my best *motos componere fluctus*. Was told Randolph had come on to this burning ground. Hurried into House. Found that Redmond was going to follow him, so made up my mind to forestall, and when

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R. C. sat down, I got up, got over the thin ice as I best could, and uncommon thin it was. As Goschen truly said to me later in the evening, it is much easier to get yourself out of a scrape of this sort, than to explain away another man. However, I skated along, listened to with close and painful interest, and after winding up with a good strong deliverance about H. R., I sat down amid plenty of cheering. Not a nice task, but everybody seemed to feel that I had made the best of it. Redmond followed me in a very able, slightly wicked speech. We went to Labouchere's amendment upon the Address, protesting against the continuance of the legislative powers of the House of Lords. This of course was a demonstration in favour of Harcourt against the new premier. Ministers were defeated by 2, amid wild exultation of Radicals and Irish.

Wednesday, March 14.—Cabinet at H. of C. at 11.30. Settled the way out of the scrape of the rejected Address. In the House Harcourt too solemn. Balfour in a vein of admirable raillery. Harcourt moved and I seconded the new Address —a very unexpected ray of parliamentary glory! The Parnellites *plus* T. W. R. pounding into me all the afternoon. Quite like old times.

Thursday, March 15.—Cabinet at noon in the old room at Downing Street. At Rosebery's desire, I sat at his left hand. Next to me Asquith. Harcourt explained Budget. A trifle long, but excellently clear. Took about an hour. Message from Rosebery to go to him in Whips' room. Took my hand and kept it for a minute, thanking me with real feeling for standing up for him. "Tush!" said I, "that's one of the few true delights of political life." He wanted me to go out with him, but I could not leave the House. As he fared forth alone, I wondered how it was that all of us who pressed him into it against his

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own judgment, had failed to realise the isolation of a peer premier — our lobbies all seething, fermenting, and buzzing. There is another plausible side to it, though! A man's judgment may be none the worse for being away from it all. As is mostly the case in political questions of this sort, there is no more to be said than that all depends.

END OF VOL. I

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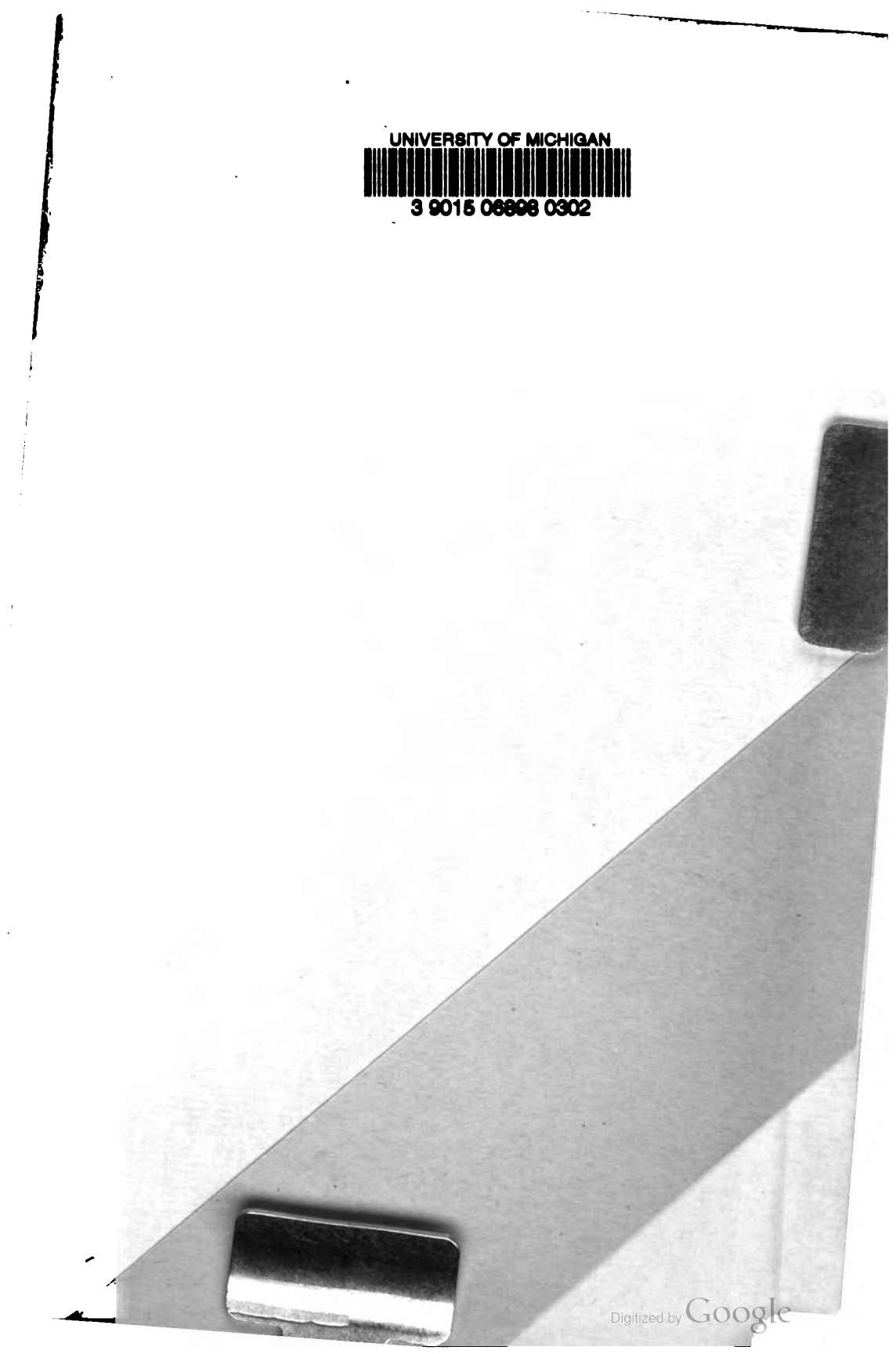

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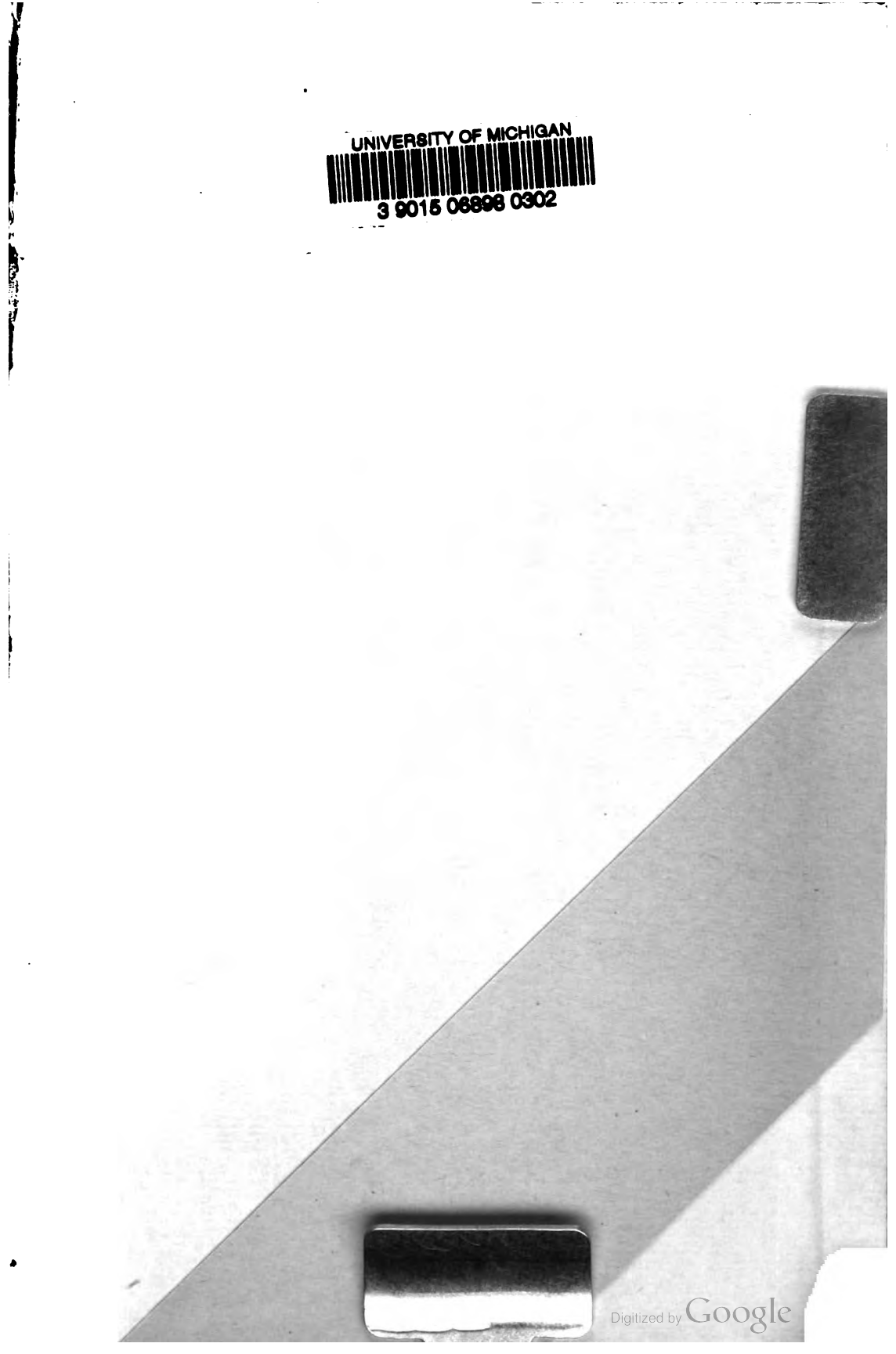

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